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**ERIC ANDERSEN Blue River**

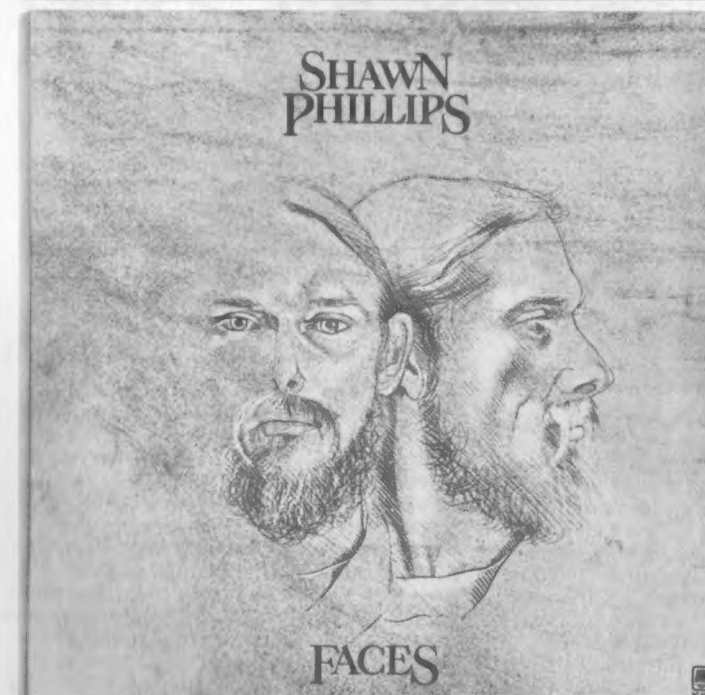
**Loggins And Messina**

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*John* **Time Out**



# \*TALKING WITH\*

# GENESIS

ZZ: You've been on the road now, on and off, for some years, during which time you must've seen a few changes . . . can we start by talking about the early gigs - where were they?

Peter Gabriel (for and on behalf of Genesis): Oh, they were very sparse . . . places like Friars in Aylesbury, Farx at Southall, a club in Godalming, and a gig, I remember, at the GKN Social Club annual binge somewhere in Birmingham - that was for the apprentices, who preferred reggae, so we didn't go down too well.

ZZ: Did you ever do any gigs which were so distant that you stayed out overnight?

PG: Yes - after that GKN one, we slept on the floor of the social club, and after we'd signed with Strat (Tony Stratton Smith of Charisma Records), we did increasingly more gigs and had to stay away quite a bit. We never had to sleep in the van, but we stayed in some pretty rough guest houses; if you're only getting £30 for a gig and the transport is costing £15, there isn't much left for hotels - particularly when you're using that money for the week's food bill. There was one place we used to stay which was so damp that the bedclothes were actually wet; the rooms were like dormitories, sleeping 8 people, and using all Army surplus stuff for the bedding. . . it was a lorry drivers' place, I think. That

was in either Derby or Blackpool, I've forgotten which, but both those places stick in my memory for their notorious guest houses.

ZZ: What was the food like at these places?

PG: That was usually alright; the people were kindhearted and used to give you a good breakfast at whatever time you wanted, which is more than can be said for some of the more expensive hotels we stay in now, where you miss breakfast altogether if you don't get up early enough. . . there's no flexibility about meals at all. What we've been doing lately is booking into country hotels, a few miles outside the cities we're playing in, which are not only more reasonable, but they give us a chance to take a morning stroll in the country rather than wake up to the noise of traffic. In fact, it's rather strange and unreal to stay at a quiet hotel like that (because they're almost deserted at this time of year) and then drive off to a gig where you walk onto the stage to be warmly applauded by a couple of thousand people.

ZZ: What about transport - how has

that changed?

PG: Well, we started off with an old bread van, which used to accommodate all of us and what equipment we had, and then we moved on to a Transit, but now the group travels in two hired cars and we have a lorry for the equipment and another lorry for the lights.

ZZ: So how big is the road crew now?

PG: There are seven altogether, and that number will increase, because we're planning on taking more extensive paraphernalia around with us. The overheads are increasing all the time, but I really think it's worth it and I hope it'll help us to get a lot more through to the audience - particularly the lyrics, because with a conventional rock'n'roll band you hear a few words like "baby" and "all night" and you get the idea of all the rest, but if you're trying to build up a fantasy situation and they're only hearing one word in ten, it's not going to be very effective.

ZZ: But the pa you're using now is as clear as a bell. . . I've seldom heard such clarity; what sort is it?

PG: It's a Kelsey Morris, which we are hiring. Yes, I agree it's a great improvement over what we've been using in the past.

ZZ: Aren't you tending to overestimate your audience a little? I mean, the

average rock concert audience is content to wallow in a solid barrage of sound, where participation is limited to waving your arms about . . . there's only minimal demands on the listener's mind. Don't you think that, unless they're familiar with your records, the lyrics just fly right over their heads, unheeded?

PG: Well, I don't see any reason why that situation should persist; I think a lot of people are trying to break that down at the moment - and I think it will be broken down to the extent where audience involvement and interest will change its focus. I'm certain that a percentage of our audiences listen to us and build images of the music in their minds, rather than a more conventional audience which is happy to leap around and join in on the choruses - though I don't mind that sort of encouragement myself, especially in 'The Knife'. I think the time is coming when the person of the artist will become less important in this sort of medium, and though the guys playing the music will be there, they'll be secondary to the music - they won't be the be-all and end-all. Have you seen the Red Buddha Theatre?

ZZ: No, I must confess.

PG: Well, they're a very trendy thing at the moment, but I went along to see them, partly because I felt I ought to educate myself a little, and I thought I'd have to work at that to understand what was going on, but I didn't at all; I just sat back and enjoyed it. . . but what I'm getting to is that the role of the musicians, although obviously very important, was to present the music and not to project their egos all the time. It was a happy medium; you weren't looking at them all the time, but it wasn't as far removed as the orchestra hidden in the pit. . . it was somewhere in between.

ZZ: Yes, but all the business and media surrounding Genesis is surely geared to the front-page-of-the-Melody-Maker thing - the promotion of 'stars'. I can see the music being more important than the musicians in a 'Come Dancing' situation, but not in the pop world, where 'image' is what counts. Do members of the audience ever come up and comment on the group?

PG: All the time. I must say that I prefer criticism to unserved praise, because that, after you

have heard it a few times, becomes a little shallow to say the least. I mean, if you got carried away during the concert, great, but to be told how "wonderful, amazing, fabulous, sensational, beautiful, etc" you were, doesn't really help anybody very much. I suppose I like objective comment most, and people who's views are either very positive or else very negative; I don't like hoverers. . . but I know that a lot of people refrain from making critical remarks for fear of injuring our egos - it's usually people who know us well who come up and say things like "you played a real bummer tonight", and there again, it's easier for us to take criticism from those we know and respect. The last gig we did, some guy went up to Phil and said "my heartiest condolences", going on to explain how terrible he thought the gig was, and some other guys came backstage to tell us how very wicked we were charging 70p when they'd once seen Eric Clapton for six bob and how he'd got a much better sound out of an old Vox AC30.

ZZ: I reckon if I were in a band, I'd be very glad of praise but very susceptible to depression if I was criticised. . . do you ever get swayed by criticism?

PG: Sometimes. For example, once I was got at by a reviewer who found something I did in a particular song rather odious; I can't remember now exactly what it was, but this guy pointed out how obnoxious he thought it was - and subsequently, each time I approached that part of the song, I was thinking to myself "here it comes again" and I'd get very self-conscious about it - which is the last thing you should do, to start looking at yourself like that.

ZZ: Did you find that in the old days, when you were struggling for recognition, the press called you things like "pretentious" and "sterile" and "contrived", because your music was reaching beyond the conventional limitations of a set time-signature, an unadventurous melody and chord structure, and lyrics involving "arms and charms" and "loving man and hold your hand"?

PG: Oh yes, we got plenty of that alright, but then we seemed to find one or two "allies" who were prepared to listen to what we were doing and treat it seriously rather than just dismiss it out of hand - and we tend to take more notice of their comments than those of writers who's reviews tend to be superficial or to contain inaccuracies. As far as pretension goes, that's something you've got to sort out in your own mind, and



TONY BANKS • Organ • mellotron • piano



MIKE RUTLEDGE • Bass • bass pedals • 12 string guitar



PETER GABRIEL • Lead voice • flute • oboe



once you've decided what you're going to do, and you think it's right, you've got to stick by it... but the press man's ego-trap, one feels, is always there waiting to ensnare the unsuspecting band. They seem to enjoy the glory of discovering a band, and then the glory of destroying it.

ZZ: But the thing there is that although there have always been a few journalists who supported your efforts, none of them can claim to have "discovered" Genesis, because if ever there was a case of a band having been "discovered" by its audience, you are it. All the papers have done is latched on to the fact that audiences dug you. What do you think of the music press, generally?

PG: I don't think that the British music press is very good on the whole - not with respect to us particularly, but to the scene in general. You can't generalise, but it seems to me that the informed journalists in other countries know their subjects better than those in this country. One thing I've noticed lately is how a Rolling Stone mould is washing through the British press at the moment - you know, you start off describing the buns you had for tea, then you go into the guy's dope adventures, and so on... I do sense a certain amount of imitation.

ZZ: What do you think of Rolling Stone itself?

PG: I quite like it; I think it's very readable.

ZZ: I think you hit the nail on the head about "the dope adventures" bit - it seems that they only ever do articles on blokes who have suffered tortuous withdrawal and rehabilitation after years of secret drug addiction.

PG: Our press doesn't seem to provide any solid support for musicians... they're too fickle.

ZZ: But the weekly papers don't generally work along the lines of supporting a certain artist so much as supporting various friends and publicists. If I look through the papers, I can tell which publicists have been touting their clients, because chances are they'll have been on the phone to me too. I can tell them to get stuffed, but for the weeklies, it's their business... the publicists provide them with waffle every week in the same way that a clothes factory supplies shops.

PG: Yes, I can appreciate that, but they don't seem to stick with an artist. Take Paul McCartney, for instance; I agree to a certain extent that some of his post Beatle material isn't as exciting as his work with the Beatles, but he came in for a really rough time - they almost totally dismissed him. I mean, here's a guy with more craftsmanship at his art than 90% of all the gods and demi-gods they're creating week by week... and they just threw him in the dustbin. So much of this business is just images, packaged and sold.

ZZ: So you're waiting for the day when, having "discovered" you, they'll be getting ready to destroy you and chuck you in the dustbin too!

PG: Yes! But I think there are ways of avoiding the dustbin; it's an art which one may or may not pick up as time goes on.

ZZ: To change the subject swiftly, can you tell us about your shaven fore-

lock?

PG: Ah, I have set answers for that one now! Let me trot them out for you:  
1. It's a cheap gimmick.  
2. It's easier to identify myself for the purpose of entering gigs, where efficient jobsworths used to refuse me entry - not believing that I was in the group.  
3. The lice cross from the left side to the right every evening at exactly 7pm and I can swat them more easily.  
4. I like to stand on my head every once in a while and this affords more balance.  
5. It's an external indication of the spiritual desert which lies within.  
6. I've got a subconscious desire to join the Hare Krishna movement.  
7. It's the result of a very nasty shaving accident.

ZZ: I see... delete where necessary. Can I probe you about your interest in Zen, because that's a sphere about which I know nothing.

PG: Well, I've read a few books, that's all, and talked to a few people - and the ideas of Zen really appeal to me. I haven't got any immediate plans for booking my ticket to the Zen monastery or anything, but I must say that I've found more excitement in Zen than in anything else I've come across for a very long time. I find that a lot of the things which appeal to me personally - like Spike Milligan, and some of Monty Python - seem to contain elements of Zen, but having said that, I find it rather difficult to explain what I mean. One answer to "what is Zen?" was "that's it", but very briefly, it's a state where life flows freely, uninterrupted by the tamperings and conditioning of the mind.

ZZ: How did you stumble into it... were you generally interested in spiritual realms?

PG: I am interested in those sort of things, yes. There's a huge amount of knowledge in those areas which will, at some stage or another, become of great use, I'm sure. Yoga, for example... I can't imagine anyone studying that for, say, a year and not finding it very valuable. At present there is a group of neurologists at Gower St (in London University) who are studying the spine in conjunction with Yogic learning, and they're coming up with some very fascinating conclusions which bear out what the Yogis have been saying for years and years. The thing is, that once these unexplained things are noted and "approved" by scientists, they're taken far more seriously - like the razor blade in the pyramid thing; some scientists in Czechoslovakia proved without doubt that if a razor blade is suspended, in a certain position, inside a pyramid, it will remain sharp... you can use it and replace it in the pyramid and it won't ever lose its edge. On the face of it, that sounds stupid, but it's been scientifically proved... but we are going off at a tangent here. I believe that there are a lot of external forces, or whatever you like to call them, which we don't understand but which do provide guidelines and knowledge to certain people at certain times. Audiences, I think, would be surprised at the number of musicians who are involved in, and have used, so-called spiritual studies... people like Bowie, Fripp, Peter Hamill, Jimmy Page, all have a high level of awareness in these things.

ZZ: Supposing readers are interested in following up on Zen - is there a 'beginners' book you could recommend?

PG: Yes, there's a very good book called 'Zen in English Literature', edited by RH Blyth and available from The Buddhist Society Bookshop, whose address I've forgotten but it'll be in the London phone directory. That's a book you can open at any page and start reading. One of the principles of Zen is that whatever you're doing, you do it 100%... If you're cleaning your teeth, for instance, you can regard that as the most important moment of your life for that time... and similarly, conventionally important things can be regarded as unimportant.

ZZ: How does it relate to your singing?

PG: Well, at the moment I'm only on the fringes of Zen really - I don't have too much opportunity to practise it, but, because of my background, I'm a very inhibited sort of person and I see Zen as a means of release from a lot of these inhibitions - and I'm becoming less inhibited, though you probably do as a matter of course in this business.

ZZ: Let's talk about your visit to America last December (the subject of a vast tome called "To the New World with Genesis", which might even get published one day). Did you like what you saw of New York?

PG: I liked it more than I'd expected to... I have this vivid memory of the streets looking like a futurist painting, with steam hurling out of holes in the road, and tremendous energy and speed hurtling from all quarters, but the visit was over so quickly that we didn't have time to have a good look round... I managed to go to the Museum of Modern Art, but that was about it.

ZZ: There was a great deal of backstage exasperation at the Philharmonic Hall gig - what was that all about?

Tony Banks: We had a lot of equipment problems; everything needed modification before it would function properly, and then, just before we were to go on stage, one of the amplifiers blew up completely and we had to rush out and hire another one, which did nothing but buzz and hum throughout the set. That wasn't so bad in the numbers which were loud enough to cover the buzz, but in 'Supper's Ready', for instance, when there's a quiet passage of three or four minutes at the beginning, it was just so embarrassing - we were all cringing.

PG: It was just a shambles; I felt worse after that gig than I had done for a long time.

Tony: Afterwards, we came off stage, Mike threw his bass on the floor and we really thought we'd blown it....

In actual fact, they hadn't blown it, of course... nobody in the audience even realised there was anything at all wrong; they thought it was a magnificent performance (and heaped loads of "unreserved praise" on the group). (I'm waffling here... trying to get to the bottom of the page so I can pack up and go to bed). What else can I say? Ah yes, this interview will be continued in Zigzag 30, when we'll be talking about their albums and how some of the songs were written. There, that should just about do it. Pete

## Genesis String Driven Thing

**PHILHARMONIC HALL, NYC** — Eyes, those mirrors of the soul, foretold of a special night. Hope gleamed from every optical orb. A charity concert for the United Cerebral Palsy Foundation with no "names" in the traditional sense at three dollars and one gift to a seat. The presents were for the children aided by the organization, and the audience brought armfuls of them. Some teenage Santas filled huge Hefty trashcan liners to the brim with their gifts; obviously they felt they couldn't ring just one. WNEW-FM announcers emceed the show which brought two Buddah-distributed rismas acts to America for the time. Hope became belief in vs than one.

Driven Thing, a four-Scottish rock group opened. I is much like early Grace 'rson Airplane with a apa John Creach (in the violinist Graeme Smith). The rest here lies in the person-vocalist and percussionist 'ams. She looks the most of the quartet, and cuts in figure on tambourine and Chris on ather pure stuff they e number "a bit To Love." we wit- us, upon ion, to be year, as concerned. x a quar- just one e the au-lemanded

Drums, voices, tinkles, booms, noises

Two British Bands, New Here, Indicate Evolution in Rock

The New York Times J. J. CROOK '04





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# DOUG SAHM & BAND



DON



PHIL

**T**he original idea was for me to actually interview Don and Phil. They were in England for the best part of a month, and I had all the right phone numbers and names to enable me to get hold of them... but unfortunately, my time-table never quite seemed to match with theirs, and the closest I got to actually speaking to one of the immortal Everly Brothers was at 1.30 one morning, when I think I woke one of them up at their hotel. To my eternal shame, I was unable to identify whether the brief request to ring again at a more civilised hour was uttered by Don or Phil. It could, of course, have been a mere manager but I would like to believe this was not so and that I actually woke up one of Kentucky's two most famous singing sons. So this is not to be an interview. This does not matter - the only question I really wanted to ask them is why have they only just recorded the Buddy Holly classic 'Not Fade Away' when they have continually stated that it was written specifically for them. 'Not Fade Away' is on their latest album 'Pass The Chicken And Listen' - but 14 years does seem an inordinately

long time to get around to recording a song written especially for you.

I first heard the Everly Brothers in July 1957 on a broken juke-box in a transport cafe just outside Preston, somewhere on the A6. The juke-box had got stuck and was playing 'Bye bye Love' over and over again, so that by the time I got back into the coach I had learned the song off by heart. And it wasn't just the song. The two voices in one were irresistible, unequalled for precision and beauty in pop music before or since, and were a staggering influence on rock and pop in the years that followed 'Bye bye Love'. But (I'm delighted to say) this has all been said many times before - this assessment of the Everlys' talents is not an opinion, but fact, and anyone disagreeing is ipso facto wrong.

When I went to see the Everlys at the London Palladium last autumn I was more than a little apprehensive. Their most recent album at that time, 'Stories We Could Tell' had been pretty ropey, and as I sat through Dave Loggins and the Searchers, I was convinced I would

only be seeing shadows of their former greatness when Don and Phil stepped out onto the stage. I should have stayed at home, with my memories of their tours during the days when every single with the word Everly on it was a top 10 certainty. But when they did appear, they soon showed that there was nothing to worry about. In perfect contrast to the Searchers, who might have been quite good if they hadn't played fairly gentle songs such as 'Sweets for my sweet' and 'Needles & Pins' at Grand Funk/Black Sabbath volume, the Everlys' sound, balance and stage production were perfect. They kicked off with 'Bowling Green' (which was their last American Top 40 success in May 1967 - in fact it was their last American Top 100 success) and never looked back. Hit followed hit and they could have played their most famous songs for twice as long without repeating themselves. Their harmonies were as tight as ever, their timing impeccable, and it was only on a few songs such as 'I'll Kissed you' that the backing reminded one that this was not the original recording. Amazing that their sound would stand up so well after so many years.

## AN APPRECIATIVE GUIDE TO THE EVERLY BROTHERS



Halfway through the act, they announced some new songs from 'Stories We Could Tell'. I thought this is it – the low spot of the act. But the 3 songs they did from this album ('Mabel's room', 'Brand New Tennessee Waltz' and the title track) were as outstanding as the string of proven hits that preceded them. Could the album not have been as bad as all that after all? I played it again the next day and found that in fact it was not a bad LP – merely a mediocre one. And it is not the Everlys' fault. At least, it is not the fault of their voices – I don't know how much influence they had on the arrangements or production, but it's in that department that the album really fails. When they sang their new songs with the simplest of back-up groups on stage, one could actually hear the Everly Brothers' greatest asset over and above everything else – their superb voices. On 'Stories We Could Tell' there is an army of heavy musicians being very heavy and very boring, who all but drown the vocals. Paul A Rothchild, as producer, is obviously one of the guilty men, which is surprising as his work with the Doors (among others) was always immaculate. Still, we all have our off days. It's a pity Rothchild's were when he was with the Everly Brothers.

'Pass the Chicken and Listen', at the time of writing, is their latest album and it's a much better effort than was 'Stories' – with Chet Atkins as producer and an imaginative selection of songs, the album keeps the brothers themselves in the spotlight and gives one hope that the next truly great Everly recording sessions are just around the corner. But that's only a guess – maybe Don and Phil aren't too concerned about making any more pop masterpieces – they've made enough already to ensure immortality.

Don and Phil never really made it on image. Sure they looked pretty good on all their Cadence LPs, but they never dripped sex or smouldered. In the days of their greatest success, their stage act was restrained compared with those of some of their contemporaries. They made it on pure sound and any attempt to analyse them beyond their records is ludicrous if one is attempting to analyse their appeal. And when one looks at the list of their records, the Everlys virtually defy analysis here too. It's easy to see why their early records all made it, and almost as easy to see why most of their later ones didn't.

They began their recording career with Archie Bleyer's now defunct Cadence label and never recorded one bad track while they were there. This is an incredible achievement despite the fact that their output was limited to three albums and a dozen singles, 38 tracks in all. Of these 38, 12 were on the album 'Songs Our Daddy Taught Us', which for 1958 was an extremely courageous LP, breaking away from the standard 50s teen LP format of hits and b-sides lumped together with 3 or 4 tracks that never quite made it as singles. 'Songs Our Daddy Taught Us' was a superb country album; 12 traditional American folk songs and not a whiff of the Hot 100 or rock'n'roll. Of the other 26 Cadence titles, 16 made the American charts including several b-sides... the other 10 were non-chart b-sides and album fillers for their other two, more conventionally programmed, Cadence LPs. There is a long list of Cadence era classics; 'Bye bye Love', 'Wake up little

Susie', 'All I have to do is dream', 'Til I kissed you', 'Problems', 'Bird dog', 'Let it be me' and 'When will I be loved' to name but eight that went gold.

When they moved to Warners in 1960, for a while they carried on where they left off; only more so. 'Cathy's clown' (the single) and 'It's Everly Time' (the album) were their starters for Warners. 'Cathy's Clown' was the first ever single released on the Warner Brothers label in England and Warners have never had a bigger hit in England since. 'Cathy's Clown' was the Everlys' biggest ever single and 'It's Everly Time' was indisputably their best album apart from the various Greatest Hits collections. For



The Everly Brothers of over 15 years ago; the sleeve photo of their first LP

a while, they kept up this phenomenal standard of singles ('So Sad', 'Ebony Eyes', 'Walk Right Back') but on their albums they slipped from magnificent to very good ('A Date With The Everly Brothers') and then from very good to alright ('Both Sides Of An Evening'). A year after the release of 'Cathy's Clown', their record of the oldie 'Temptation' was a comparative failure for them in America, although in England it was one of their biggest ever hits, making number one. The follow-up single, 'Don't Blame Me'/'Muskkrat', didn't do very well anywhere and des-

pite a spirited revival in 1962 with 'Crying in the rain' and 'That's Old Fashioned', the really golden chart days of the Everly Brothers were over.

By 1963, Don's health was at a dangerously low ebb and the Everly Brothers' records had lost about 80% of their former glory. In 1964 and 1965, there was a marked improvement with the appearance of tracks like 'Gone Gone Gone' and 'Ferris Wheel', and by 1965 the Everlys amazingly topped the British charts again (for the last time) with 'The Price Of Love', which funnily enough was not a patch on the two or three comparative flops that had preceded it, but 'The Price Of Love' sunk like a stone in America. They had one more hit in England, after 'The Price Of Love' – an excellent version of 'Love Is Strange', highlighted by the conversation between the two in the middle of the song. In 1967, they reached No 40 in the US charts with 'Bowling Green', but this magnificent record failed to make any impact at all in England, and the brothers have not been in the charts of either country since.

After this minor renaissance (in England, anyway) the Everlys sadly went through a pretty grim patch. Albums such as 'Two Yanks In England', on which, for some obscure reason, they recorded a whole batch of forgettable songs by the Hollies, and 'The Hit Sound of the Everly Brothers' were commercial and artistic disasters. The 'In Our Image' album was a little better and one song from this, written by Don, 'It's All Over', was a big hit for Cliff Richard. 'Roots' is always regarded as the greatest of the recent Everly Brothers albums and I suppose this is true, if only for the superb version of 'I Wonder If I Care As Much', which the brothers originally recorded back in 1957 as the flip of 'Bye bye Love'. However, 'Roots' is not a world shattering record in the sense that 'Songs Our Daddy Taught Us' or 'It's Everly Time' were.

There are two good batches (comprising all 38 tracks) of the Everlys' old Cadence recordings available for those who were too young or too stupid not to get the original albums – 'The Everly Brothers Original Greatest Hits' and 'The Everly Brothers: End Of An Era', both double albums re-released on the CBS-owned Barnaby label. On Warners, 'The Golden Hits Of The Everly Brothers' is essential. Not essential is 'The Very Best Of The Everly Brothers' – although the list of titles is extremely impressive, half the tracks are re-recordings of the greatest Cadence hits and are just not quite as good. If you can get hold of 'It's Everly Time' and 'A Date With The Everly Brothers', and possibly also the 'Gone Gone Gone' and 'Roots' albums, you would have the cream of the work of Don and Phil in your hands. Of course, with truly great artists, any record is usually worth having, but I think the ones mentioned will enable anybody to appreciate the greatness of the two brothers from Brownie Kentucky. Tim Rice (Yes, the very same)

PS from Pete: See also our interview in Zigzag 12, and John Tobler's piece in Let It Rock (December 1972). There is an excellent Everly single out that you should have (available on import only): 'I'm on my way home again'/'The Cuckoo Bird' (with Clarence White on lead guitar and Gene Parsons on drums and banjo).

## New life brought to today's music

"One of the first outfits to use horns as anything but riff-strengthening devices, their influence both on the British and the continental scenes has been so profound that – without them – half the European bands wouldn't exist." Ian McDonald NME

"There's no denying that Ratledge, Hopper, Jenkins and Marshall add up to one of the heaviest propositions around, but recently the current line-up of the Soft Machine seems to have settled into a groove – albeit a funky one. They are now relaxed and laid back to an extent only a very cohesive band can be and, when the number is right they really rock the joint." NME

Soft Machine will be on Tour in the UK in February.



the music people – on records and tapes.



On CBS 68214



# Rick Wakeman and the making of The Six Wives of Henry VIII.

**Journalist/Disc Jockey Alan Black talks with Rick Wakeman of Yes about his new album.**

**Alan** Rick, I'd like to start off by congratulating you on a very fine album. It's really the most musical album I've heard in a long time. This is your first solo album, isn't it?

**Rick** Yes, that's right.

**A.B.** The first point I'd like to discuss is the theme, because it's obviously a strongly thematic album. How did it occur to you to use it as a vehicle for your music?

**R.W.** Well, in the first place I had a great deal of difficulty because I can't write words, and there's not really much point in writing songs with meaningless lyrics. I'm more into melodies and experimentation in music, and I had a lot of trouble when I started the album, back in November 71. I couldn't get any firm ideas into the music and when I took tracks home and listened to them, there was really nothing there; just 4 minutes or 2 minutes of music.

Then we went on our third American tour, and when you're on a long plane flight it gets very boring, so you call into a bookshop at the airport and buy a few books. We were at Richmond, Virginia, I think it was, and there's a bookstall there where they've only got about four books, so I picked up all four. One was the Female Eunuch, and there was one called The Private Life of Henry VIII that I started reading on the plane to Chicago. It was really strange, because as I was reading about Anne Boleyn one of the themes I put down back in November ran through my mind, and I thought then it would be a good idea to do a concept album. Now I had a goal to aim at and something to work around. So I bought a load of books on the wives of Henry VIII and formed my own opinions of their characters.

I spent about 8 months recording it, but there were a lot of problems owing to American tours in between sessions. All the time you're learning something, so you come back and want to change things, which is why it probably took so long. Of course, if you're writing something without any words it's difficult to maintain the interest of the music, to make it hold the listener's attention.

**A.B.** How much interest did you have before this recording in, say, 16th century music.

**R.W.** I was very interested in the music, but not in the historical side. At college we did a whole period of music, we had to go right from the 10th century right through. The 16th century and the baroque era were most entertaining because that time was very much a turning point. In fact, it can be very closely related to the 20th century. It was the closest thing to it insofar as the music was based around chordal and modal phrases, which a lot of rock music and even pop music is based around today.

**A.B.** One thing that struck me listening to the album is how very well modern instruments – like your custom built Hammond organ, synthesisers, mellotrons, lend themselves to this kind of music when you've used a 16th century flavour.

**R.W.** Yes, well the whole object really was to make an album that was – orchestral is the wrong word, I suppose – that had an orchestral flavour. I was trying to use the whole range of keyboard instruments, to show how they have improved over the years. In fact they're improving faster than the musicians who play them. Like the moogs, for example, they're always one step ahead of you, which is really very good. I was also trying to avoid becoming keyboard heavy, because I've found that a lot of keyboard albums are like that, very much leaning to one side. It's possible to make an album that's got such a wide variety of sounds that it doesn't become heavy.

**A.B.** Because you didn't want it to become "keyboard heavy", to use your phrase, you used various other people.

**R.W.** Yeah, I was very lucky as at one time I used to do a lot of sessions, heavy sessions, you know, jingles and so on, so I met a lot of really nice people, really good musicians. It was really strange – right from three or four years ago when I started doing sessions I always had the idea that when I wanted to do an album I'd remember all the people I'd met, the ideal people. So I used three drummers, three guitar players, four bass players, two percussionists and six girls for the choir. I think there's one fault in a lot of solo albums, which is that the artist pulls in three or four musicians to do the whole album. I think this can often be a mistake because there should be a different flavour between tracks, even though they're mainly

from the same writer. Obviously there'll be similarity in the music, but there shouldn't really be a similarity in the sound. For example, on the Katherine Parr track I wanted a really strong feel on drums, nothing subtle at all, just really heavy, with plenty of attack, so Alan White was ideal for that. Whereas on the Katherine Howard track, which was more subtle and delicate, I used Barry de Souza. I thought very carefully about things like that. **A.B.** Rick, the album called The Six Wives of Henry VIII, I know, but does it reflect your own personal feelings on what their characters must have been?

**R.W.** Yes, it's not necessarily musically in character. If it was it would be boring because it would be just like a 16th century harpsichord album. It's my own concept, almost as if I'd met them. You asked about the Anne Boleyn thing, didn't you?

**A.B.** Right. You've written all of the music except one theme which is a hymn – a dream.

**R.W.** Right, it came from a repeated dream I had. I had a lot of trouble putting the Anne Boleyn track together as it's made up of a lot of parts and the link passages were really hard to do. I had a great deal of difficulty with the ending. I dreamt that somehow I was there at her funeral, and they played this hymn. It nagged me for a bit, so I checked it up and the hymn wasn't even written then. It was really strange, but it stayed in and I still couldn't remember where I got it from.

**A.B.** On the album, the tracks are laid out three to each side but not in historical order. You've numbered them all, so obviously there's a reason for them being in that form.

**R.W.** You have to lay out the album to sound musically interesting, and if the tracks had been in chronological order there would have been 26 minutes on one side and something less on the other side, so you have to think about the timing thing. But more important than that, it was a question of personalities. I tried to lay the album out so that the personalities were in some kind of meaningful order.

**A.B.** Rick, obviously your classical playing comes out in an album like this, but there are some really jazzy pieces of music. Do you feel free and quite happy to use all forms of music whether it be classical, blues or rock?

**R.W.** Yes, I class myself as very lucky because my parents encouraged me to learn the piano, and throughout the period I was learning I was exposing myself to all sorts of music. This, I think, comes out in my playing.

**A.B.** This album is an expression of your own music – you don't want it compared with Yes.

**R.W.** I know there is no point in hiding the

fact that copies will sell to people who are very strongly into Yes and for that reason I hope they will get something else apart from the Yes sound. I always believe albums should be bought for the right reasons and, egotistical as it might sound, I am very proud of the album because I did spend a lot of time on it. As for criticism, and I know it will get a lot because I feel it is slightly different, I can stand up to and accept that because I know I have done a job I am pleased with.

**A.B.** On listening to it I find it lends itself to images. I would imagine film music is another hurdle you want to cross.

**R.W.** Yes, I'd certainly be interested if the right film was offered to me.

**A.B.** Do you want to do a concert with a view to promoting the album?

**R.W.** I think that's wrong. As I say, I want people to buy the album for the right reasons, not because it's forced upon them. I hate things that are forced upon people.

**A.B.** Do you foresee any of the music from your album being incorporated into the Yes act?

**R.W.** I do a 15 minute solo on stage, which is a conglomeration of all things.

**A.B.** Finally, Rick, I'd just like to say the best of luck with the album, and the best of luck with Yes.

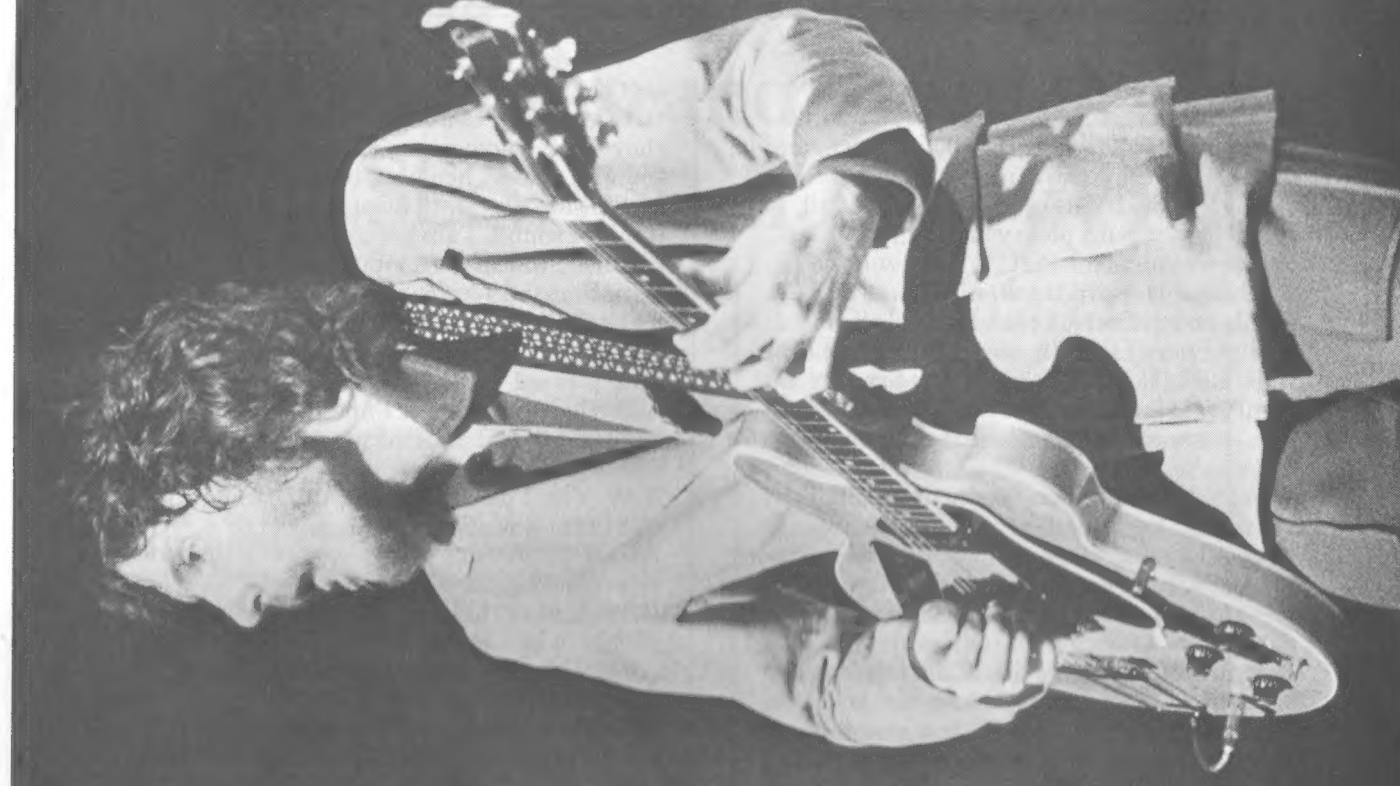
**R.W.** Thanks Alan – it's been nice talking to you.



Rick Wakeman: The Six Wives of Henry VIII

ON A&M RECORDS





# Gottings for the Beefheart Archives

During Beefheart's last visit to these shores, I was able to spend a few hours with him and members of his Magic Band, which afforded me the opportunity of recording a few miles of taped discussion, extracts of which appear below. Apart from that, I was able to witness all sorts of strange sights.... For instance, when the band bus broke down on the road to Brighton, the Captain paraded around in the road, in full stage regalia, totally unperturbed by the astonished stares of commuters flashing home.... and, earlier, to relieve a sore throat, he was passed a tiny bottle of Green Chartreuse, with which to gargle. Having taken a swig and swirled it around his throat, he became harassed - as if looking for a receptacle in which to empty the stuff. Finding none, he spat it onto the floor of the bus, just under the seat, explaining very apologetically that he had been unable to swallow it in case it'd made him drunk!

## FRANK ZAPPA

Roy Estrada: He grabbed all the publicity when we were in the Mothers.... we'd do all the albums, and somehow they all became his - Zappa's.... that's how he used to operate. His ability is, like... WOW... fantastic, but, like I say, it's the way he operates. Mind you, it's all coming back on him now; it's the nature of life... it all balances out. His equipment was all burnt in that fire, and then there was that terrible accident at the Rainbow.... but why are we talking about him? Talk about the Magic Band!

Captain Beefheart: Hell, man.... he did nothing; the boys did everything. He just crawled into the control booth and went to sleep.

Zoot Horn Rollo: Recording 'Trout Mask Replica' didn't take long at all; we went into the studio, and Mr Zappa came in and said it had to be done in a hurry. So we did a couple of songs, and he fell asleep. When he woke up, 4½ hours later, we'd just about finished the whole album.

## RY COODER

Captain Beefheart: He's just about gotten up enough nerve to tour now; he walked



out on me just before the Monterey Festival, which I thought was a terrible thing to do.... he should have told me how he felt, before it got too far. I frankly don't care for his albums; I don't like using the past.... it's very warlike to do things out of the past. Why does he need that shield? I told him before he went to England with Jack Nitzsche, to play with the Rolling Stones, that I didn't think it was a good idea.... that they would utilise him and then just throw him out like an apple stem. So he came back and said they were just horrible da da da, they took all my stuff da da da, what nasty people they were.... and then just recently, he turned round and praised them.... said what great people they were. Now that's weird!

ED BERMANN (co-writer of some of the songs on 'Safe As Milk' album)  
Captain Beefheart: He was a fellow that I met up in the desert, a writer, and we collaborated on a few songs. At the time, the group I was with wouldn't listen to a thing I said.... they said my songs were too far out for them. I thought that if I worked with someone they considered to be a professional writer, then they'd at least listen to it, and maybe even play it.

MIRROR MAN (the live album, recorded in the mid-Sixties, but released in 1971)  
Captain Beefheart: I think it was very vulgar of them to put that out. They told me that I was going to be able to mix it, but they lied to me.... and they told me that since I was mixing it, would I mind giving them some poetry for the sleeve. Of course, I said 'sure', and sent them the poetry.... and then they put it out. All the details on the cover are wrong.... they don't care.... but I like the music.

'THE BLIMP' (A track on 'Trout Mask' which sounds as if the singer is being strangled)

Captain Beefheart: That was done through a telephone; I wrote it instantly, played the horn, and then had Jimmy Semens go outside, find a phone and call up the studio.... as he recited the words, we recorded them. The song's based on that newsreel of the Hindenburg airship crash.... you got it exactly!

Above: The Captain. Top page: Rockette and Zoot Horn (photos by Barrie Wentzell)



#### LASER BEANS

Zoot Horn Rollo: We were just joking around, up at the house, with the cassette machine switched on. It started with potato chips; I had some, and Don was playing with them.... then Mark (Rockette Morton) came up and looked at them kind of funny. So Don (CB) yelled out 'watch those laser beams!.... and it developed from there, you know.

#### THE KIDS WHO STUMBLE IN ON THE RECORDING OF 'TROUT MASK'

Zoot Horn Rollo: That was during the recording of 'Neon meat dream of a octafish!.... amazing. You see, we were going to record the whole album at the house, but you can tell from 'Hair Pie Bake One' that the equipment wasn't too good. We just couldn't get it.... so Don and the Mascara Snake were wandering around in the grounds of the house, playing through horns which were miked up to the recording equipment, while we were playing inside. Well, these two kids walked past and saw these two guys out there, both wailing away.

#### EX-MEMBERS

Zoot Horn Rollo: Antennae Jimmy Semens is playing in a group somewhere (Mul), and the Mascara Snake is living in North California, near where we are.... he's painting a lot. Drumbo wanted to be a singer, so Don set up an opportunity for him, but he ran from it.... I wasn't present, but that's how I understand it happened.

#### ZOOT HORN ROLLO'S JOINING

Zoot Horn Rollo: I'd seen the band long before 'Safe As Milk' was recorded.... these guys with hair down to their waists, all dressed in black, playing these heavy blues numbers. I was only a kid at the time, but I used to talk to Don whenever I got the chance. Well, one day, he rang up and asked if I'd like to join the band.... and I had to tell him that my guitar didn't have any strings on it. So he said that would be OK, and he had me rehearsing for two weeks, on a guitar without any strings.... I was just pretending to play! I wasn't too good at the time; I just about knew what an A chord shape looked like, but I was taking all these drugs....

Later, after I realised what was happening - that I was in a group, playing and working, making music and money, I asked Don why he wanted me. He said he wanted someone young and pliable.... who would want to change; he really wanted someone who could accept him for what he was.... you see, the people who were his own age



were just old farts - and he's too creative a person to be surrounded by dried up people like that.

#### THE SLEEVE OF 'CLICK MY DECALS'

Zoot Horn Rollo: That's the Warner Bros sound stage.... a set from a movie called 'Hotel' - that's where we rehearsed. We sometimes went and played on the set of 'Bonanza' too, and Mark would run around wearing huge teeth.... it was crazy. All the chairs were special ones which were designed to break into pieces when you hit someone over the head with them.... so every time you wanted to sit down, the chances were that the chair collapsed. Crazy.

#### THE SLEEVE OF 'TROUT MASK'

Captain Beefheart: That wasn't a trout; it's a carp. What I was saying was that the carp seems to be able to thrive in polluted waters, and I'm waving to tell people that no-one else thrives on pollution.

#### JOHN COLTRANE

Captain Beefheart: Fish take care of the scales; as soon as I saw a fish, I realised that they had the scale department sewn up completely. I think I sound more like a whale or a dolphin than I do John Coltrane.

#### ON LEARNING THAT THE LYRICS HAD BEEN LEFT OUT OF THE ENGLISH RELEASES OF 'TROUTMASK & DECALS'

The \*\*\*\*\*: The absolute \*\*\*\*\*! You can print that, man.... you bring me a copy of that and I'll sign it. Oh well, I put myself in this business, so naturally I must expect the business's trade mark - the bum's rush.

#### THE DRAWING OF ROCKETTE MORTON

(which Beefheart gave me in exchange for a copy of the A&M Bootleg with 4 tracks by him included)

Captain Beefheart: How do you spell your name? I see. (Writes down my name, but spells it incorrectly - so I point it out to him). Oh, it's Connor and not Connol.... well, you can pretend that's an 'i'.

Some final Beefheartian wisdom:

(i) I don't like Walt Disney; he gave the wolf capital punishment. It's disgusting to make cartoons out of animals.... it cheapens them in people's eyes.

(ii) Andy Warhol's just trying to soup things up a bit.

(iii) The very same ass that carried mankind across the deserts of time is the ass that gave mankind the Brialmont hamburger.

Connor McKnight

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**JO'BURG HAWK**  
...a sheer marvel



Jo'Burg Hawk CAS 1064



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# GRAHAM BELL

## ...THE BIG VOICE

"Graham Bell Band a gas at Ronnies ..."  
The Raver  
Melody Maker

"He still manages to instil that hint  
of power and menace in his voice ..."  
Chris Welch  
Melody Maker

"Bell is a rough-edged vocalist who  
can rip apart the stodgiest audience.  
He has a power capable of blowing  
mikes inside out ..."

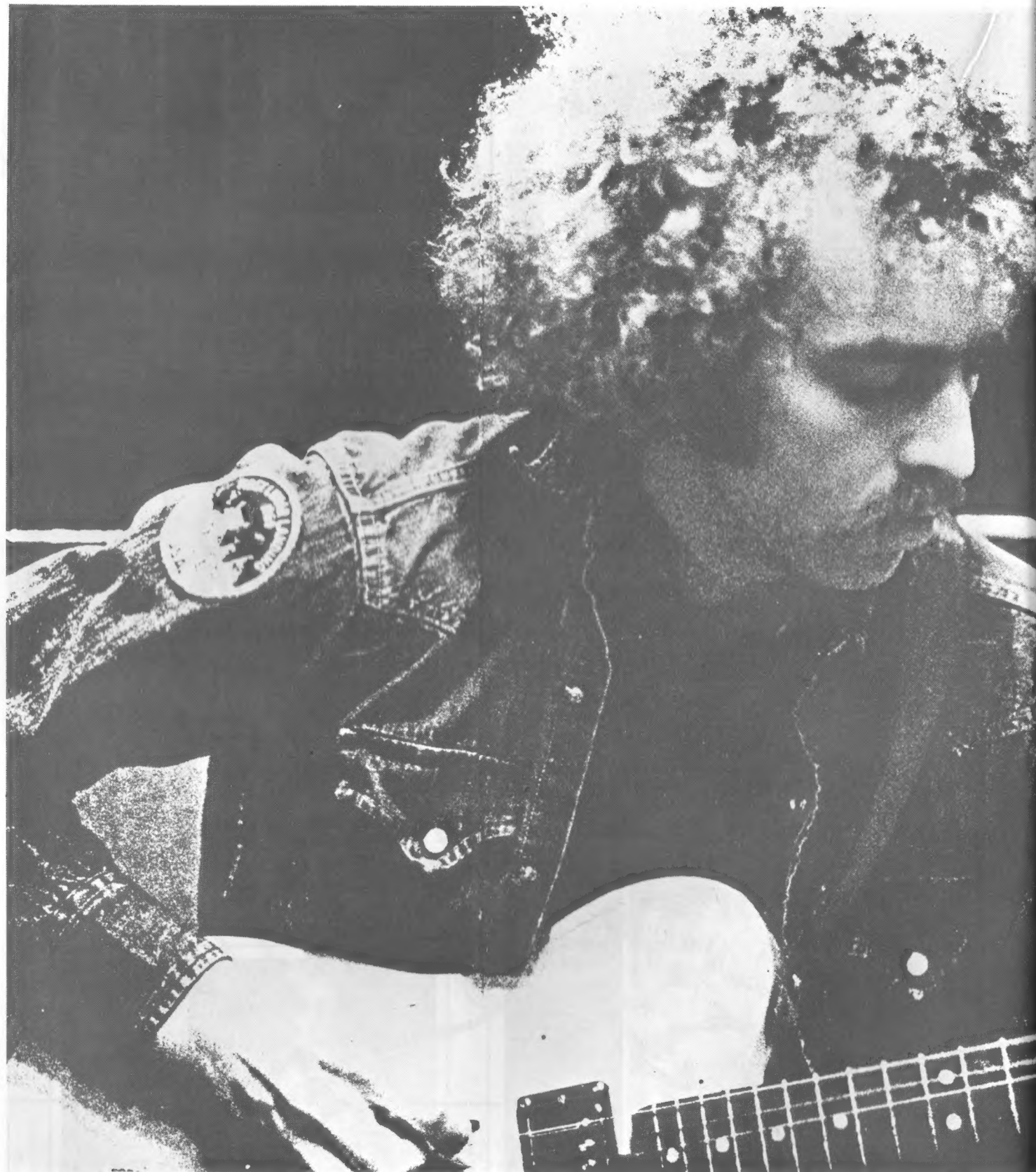
Andrew Tyler  
Disc



GRAHAM BELL - CAS 1061







# COMING INTO LOS ANGELES: THE STORY OF THE EAGLES

m

illions of people, driving millions of cars, combined with temperature inversion, provides Los Angeles with a near perfect environment for the production and containment of smog. (That's what it says on the sleeve of the last Tim Buckley album anyway). You've got smog, a terrifying population growth (over 6 million in the county area at the last count, as compared to 170,298 at the turn of the century), roads and buildings packed into nearly every square inch of

terrain, the constant fear of an earthquake opening up the San Andreas fault, and Kim Fowley..... but still LA seems to act as a huge magnet, attracting musicians to what is, after all, the hub of the recording industry - but, though the Eagles' jigsaw was completed in Los Angeles, the story begins in places as remote as San Diego, Florida, Nebraska, Colorado, Detroit and Texas.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Bernie Leadon (that's

him up there - he gets a bigger picture than the others, because he did most of the talking), arrived in San Diego in 1957, and subsequently became interested in bluegrass music, interest in which was kept going by a core of enthusiasts who used to hang out at the Blue Guitar, around which most of the local activity used to revolve. The Blue Guitar, owned by Larry Murray, and Gary Carr (see the chart), was typical of a number of West Coast instrument shops

In the late 50's/early 60's in that it not only sold stringed instruments, and acted as a meeting place for local folkies, but the owners also repaired instruments, gave lessons, and actually manufactured custom banjos, guitars and dulcimers.

"It started out really funky, a focal point for anybody who was at all interested in folk or bluegrass; you had the two camps - folkies on one side, and bluegrassers, the best of whom played in the Scottsville Squirrel

Barkers, on the other..... and then you had flamenco freaks and classical nuts too. So the Blue Guitar, for the whole of that folkie period, was a really interesting place."

"I was still very young, and I'd been into commercial folk, playing in a few little school groups, but when I met all these guys and started hanging around with them, I realised how much stronger the roots of the traditional folk music were than the commercial stuff, which at

this time, around 1961, was in its heyday on the West Coast.... As a result, I got into bluegrass banjo, listening to and learning from Kenny (Wertz). At the weekends, the shop used to hold concerts where the Squirrel Barkers would play, besides which they would do evening gigs all round the city, and play bluegrass festivals up in LA, and so there was a really good little scene happening there."

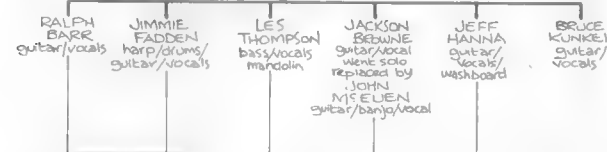
In 1962, Kenny left for

a while and Bernie stepped into the breach, playing banjo through the last days of the group until it broke up later that year when Larry Murray and Chris Hillman decided to head north to LA. Chris joined the Hillmen, with the Gosdin Brothers and Don Parmley (see Byrds Chapter 1 in ZZ 27), and Larry wound up in a short-lived Randy Sparks invention called the Green Grass Group (created to ride the coat-tails of his previous success, the New Christy Minstrels),



## The NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND #1

Autumn 1966 to February 1968. For the complete history of the Nitty Gritty DIRT Band, see Zigzag 28. Briefly, they started out in Orange County, CA, at the Paradox folk club but found themselves national stars after their very first recording effort, a single called 'Buy for me the rain', sold over a million copies. Consider to coast tours followed, but they were unable to follow up their record success. Albums: 'BUY FOR ME THE RAIN' May 1967 and 'RECOCHET' November 1967 (both on Liberty Records and unreleased here). We got an amalgamation of the best tracks: 'PURE DIRT'



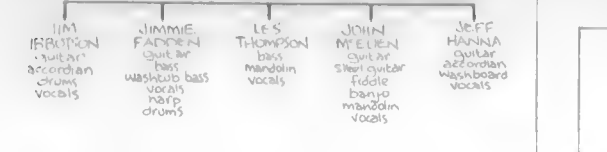
## The NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND #2

February 1968 until January 1969. As the gig situation got more and more desperate, and they were forced to play increasingly weirder places, the enthusiasm slowly began to wane. The chance of an appearance in 'Paint your wagon' cheered them up, but their contribution was vigorously chopped and it wasn't long before they decided to disband, which they did in January 1969. Two albums: 'PURE DIRT' May 1968 and 'NITE' November 1968 (amalgamated into 'PURE DIRT' for UK).



## The NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND #3

Send are still coming. In fact, there's not a single band 'til you've seen 'em. They're back for a full time gig, to link out for them. Albums (on UA): 'CHALK' at his best, 1970. 'ALL THE PRECIOUS TIME' 1971. 'WILL THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN' 1972.



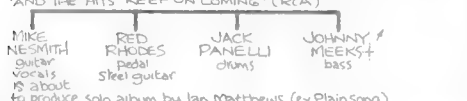
## MIKE NESMITH'S FIRST NATIONAL BAND

Formed in 1970 after the dissolution of the Monkees. Albums: 'MAGNETIC SOUTH', 'LOOSE SAWTIE', 'NEVADA FIGHTER'.



## MIKE NESMITH'S SECOND NATIONAL BAND

Not too sure about what's happening here... we'll have to search this fellow out for an interview. Two more albums: 'TANTAMOUNT TO TERROR' and 'AND THE HITS KEEP ON COMING' (RCA).



# THE EVOLUTION OF THE ENGLES

This family tree is not to any time scale and, due to the particularly inebriated behaviour of Los Angeles musicians, is much more of a mess than usual. Hope you can follow it!

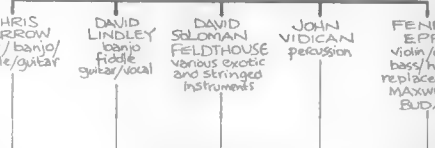
## THE ENGLES

Formed in August 1971 and still going strong! Originally came together as a session band (produced by John Fogarty). After rigorous period of rehearsal (see accompanying article) they made 'ENGLES' (1972). New album soon.



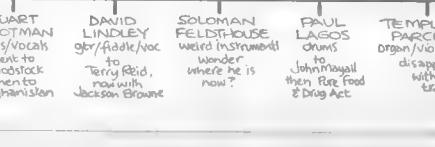
## KALEIDOSCOPE #1

Formed in Los Angeles in September 1966 and remained in this line up until 1968. Fabulous band - by far and away one of the best West Coast groups... the time is ripe for a Kaleidoscope revival (after all, they were one of Jimmy Page's favourite groups!). We must have CBS to release their first 3 albums, none of which came out here. Albums (US/EPC): 'SIDE TRIPS' June 1967, 'A BEACON FROM MANASSAS' January 1968.



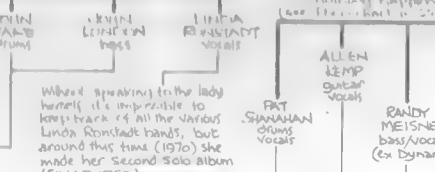
## KALEIDOSCOPE #2

1968 until 1970. I can find no one who knows anything about these blokes, which accounts for the waffle and general lack of information, but I'm well on the track of who they are. The chance of a revival together pretty soon. Albums: 'KALEIDOSCOPE' (late 1968) and 'BERNICE' (early 1970). This last one was actually released here (it is in Woolworth's 72p sale at the moment) but its least worthy piece of work, unfortunately. (Anyone with information, please send it.)



## LINDA RONSTADT & her CORVETTES

January 1969 until December 1969. Having decided to sing, Linda Ronstadt formed a band for touring.



## LONGBRANCH PENNYWHISTLE

Acoustic folkie duo; made one album for Amos label and lasted from 1968-1971.



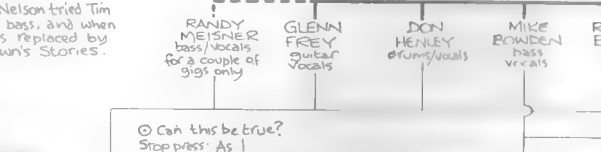
## RICK NELSON AND HIS GROUP

December 1969 until June 1971. Randy Meisner did two spells as Rick Nelson bass player (in between which he left music in return to Nebraska - but the roar of the greaseland and smell of the crowd lured him back) and was on 2 albums: 'IN CONCERT' and 'LOVE'.



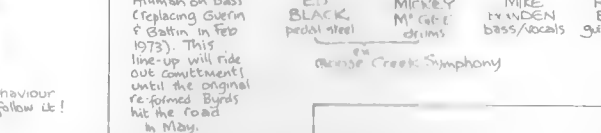
## LINDA RONSTADT GROUP

Early 1971 until July 1971. Formed on her return from European visit. Toured the States and recorded her third solo album: 'LINDA RONSTADT'.



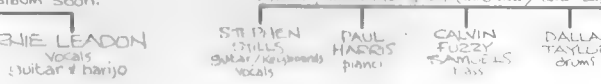
## LINDA RONSTADT GROUP

August 1971 until present. Currently touring as Neil Young One. Support group and replacing new album on Asylum.



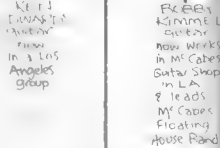
## STEPHEN STILLS' MANASSAS

Formed in August 1971 and still going strong! Originally came together as a session band (produced by John Fogarty). After rigorous period of rehearsal (see accompanying article) they made 'ENGLES' (1972). New album soon.



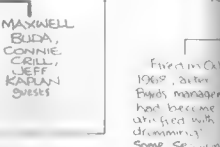
## THE STONE PONEYS

1966-68. A folkie group who made 3 Capitol albums, none released here. 'STONE PONEYS' Aug 1967, 'EVERGREEN' Aug 1967, 'LINDA RONSTADT & FRIENDS' April 1968. Then Linda went solo.



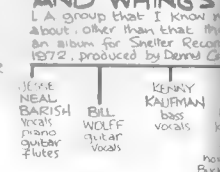
## JESSE, WOLFE AND WHINGS

L.A. group that I know nothing about, other than that they had an album for Shelter Records in 1972. Produced by David Geffen.



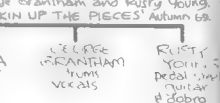
## THE POOR

1964 until 1968. Started in Denver, Colorado, but moved to L.A. in 1966. They were a folkie band.



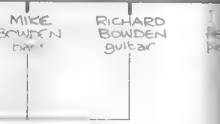
## POCO #1

November 1968 until September 1969. Richie Furby and Jim Messina, at a loose end after the disintegration of the Buffalo Springfield, were casting around for suitable people for their projected group. The roadie of the Poor, a friend of Richie's, suggested Randy and two other Colorado blokes, George Grantham and Rusty Young. Album (Epic import only): 'PICK UP THE PIECES' Autumn 69.



## SHILOH

Shiloh began life as a dixieland jazz band, evolved into a rock group, and finally became Shiloh. 7 years later in 1970 spent most of their time in Texas but came to LA to record an album (produced by Bob Seger) for Amos Records. Fell apart in early 1971.



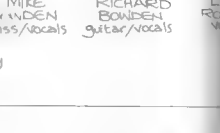
## LINDA RONSTADT GROUP

Early 1971 until July 1971. Formed on her return from European visit. Toured the States and recorded her third solo album: 'LINDA RONSTADT'.



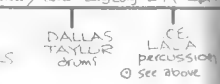
## LINDA RONSTADT GROUP

August 1971 until present. Currently touring as Neil Young One. Support group and replacing new album on Asylum.



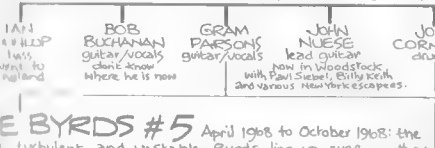
## STEPHEN STILLS' MANASSAS

Formed in August 1971 and still going strong! Originally came together as a session band (produced by John Fogarty). After rigorous period of rehearsal (see accompanying article) they made 'ENGLES' (1972). New album soon.



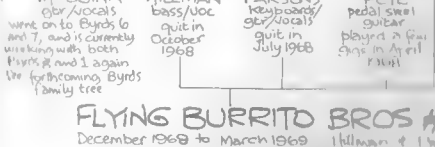
## INTERNATIONAL SUBMARINE BAND

Formed in Cambridge, Mass. during 1967 when Gram Parsons was at Harvard, but moved out to Los Angeles where they established themselves as one of the earliest country rock bands, playing Johnny 'hook' (Merle Haggard type stuff as well as their own material). One album: 'SAFE AT HOME' (April 1968 on LHI Records - import only and long deleted by now).



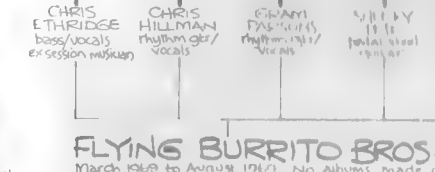
## THE BYRDS #5

April 1968 to October 1968: the final turbulent and unstable Byrds line-up ever... they happened on into total chaos around the time of their South American tour. Parsons quit on the morning of their departure. Carlos Bernal had to learn guitar on the plane & replace Parsons on the tour. Hillman quit over the situation of their management. Further information in the Byrds in Zigzag. Album: 'SWEETHEART OF THE RODEO' Aug 1968.



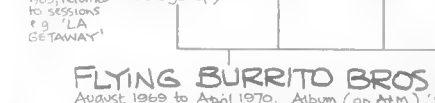
## FLYING BURRITO BROS #1

December 1968 to March 1969. Hillman & Leaden made up and became Friends (forgetting their Byrds A-gram tour feud). Messing about with ideas up in Topanga Canyon, they decided to form a group. I had an album (on A&M): 'THE GILDED PALM' (4 Jan 1969).



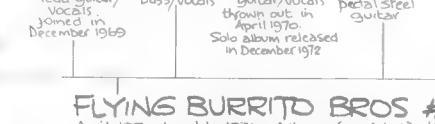
## FLYING BURRITO BROS #2

March 1969 to August 1969. No albums made during this period. Despite the flashy exterior (see the Nitty Gritty DIRT Band), this was a most unflashy and unpretentious group. Sneekey Pete says "everyone concerned with the band had a rather juvenile attitude towards the whole thing" (sands).



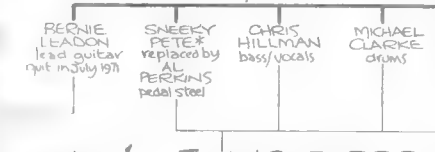
## FLYING BURRITO BROS #3

August 1969 to April 1970. Album (on A&M): 'BURRITO DELUXE' May 1970. Sneekey Pete: "Chris and Gram used to argue a lot, and Gram left at our request. It just turned into a big hassle. He had a motorcycle accident and a personal problem, so we decided it was time for him to go."



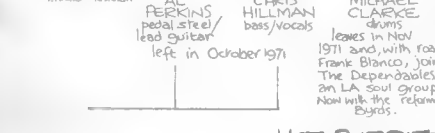
## FLYING BURRITO BROS #4

April 1970 to July 1971. Album (on A&M): 'THE FLYING BURRITO BROTHERS'. The group really begins to fall apart; Sneekey leaves because he feels "the group wasn't being run democratically" and then Bernie leaves to put his abilities to better use.



## FLYING BURRITO BROS #5

July 1971 until October 1971. One album (A&M): 'THE LAST OF THE RED HOT BURRITOS', considered by many to be their best. On its last legs, the group makes a valiant effort to rally, but the lure of Stephen Stills seals their fate & the Burritos finally disintegrate.



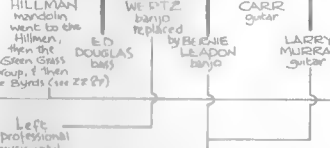
## HOT BURRITO REVUE with COUNTRY GAZETTE

Nov 1971 to Summer 1972, and then 25 parts of bogus Flying Burrito Bros. Album (on UA): 'A TRAITOR IN OUR MIDS' 1972. Visited England and Double album (on Bumble Records) released March 1973 (no details yet).



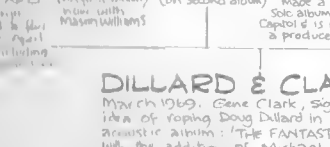
## THE SCOTTSDALE SQUIRREL BARKERS

Legendary San Diego bluegrass group, lasted from around 1958 to 1962 & made one very rare album (on Crown Records): 'BLUEGRASS FAVORITES' (Anyone got a copy?)



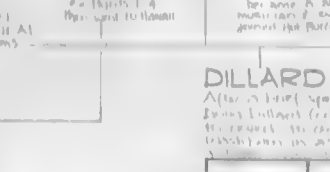
## HEARTS AND FLOWERS

Formed in the Los Angeles folk circuit between 1964 and 1966 & recorded for Capitol Records. Number of which were released here: 'NOW IS THE TIME' (see above) & 'HIDES KIDS & FRODOGN N WOMEN' (July 1968).



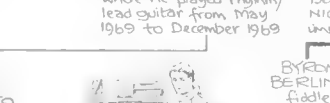
## DILLARD & CLARK #1

August 1968 until March 1969. Gene Clark, signed to A&M as a solo artist, had the idea of roping Doug Dillard in and forming a group. They recorded an album: 'THE FANTASTIC JOURNEY OF DILLARD & CLARK' (Oct 1968), and then, with the addition of Michael Clarke began to play electric country.



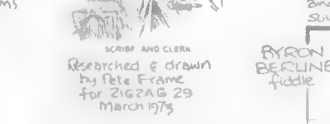
## DILLARD & CLARK #2

March 1969 - May 1969. After a brief spell of playing electric country rock, Gene Clark and Doug Dillard (reunited with Michael Clarke's departure) decided to return to acoustic bluegrass and folk, and brought Donna Dillard into the band. This made left Bernie Leaden (who had replaced Jeff Hanna, who had replaced the Nitty Gritty DIRT Band, and was now playing on the Nitty Gritty DIRT Band).



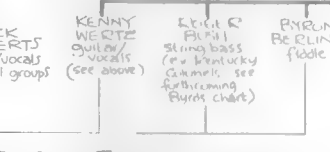
## DILLARD & CLARK #3

May 1969 to December 1969. One album on A&M: 'THROUGH THE MORNING, THROUGH THE NIGHT'. Having never played a gig outside Southern California, it was impossible to secure any national reputation and Gene Clark opted out.



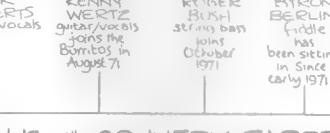
## DILLARD & the EXPEDITION

A little known group which, surprisingly, was going for over a year (December 1969 to early 1971), playing clubs and bars in California and Las Vegas. Made no albums, but contributed to the sound track of 'Vanishing Point'. Evolved slowly into Country Gazette.



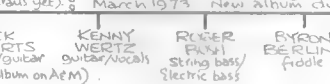
## COUNTRY GAZETTE

Early 1971 to Summer 1971. No albums. Byron & Rose (who had been in the band) left (later in the Expedition) for a bluegrass group.



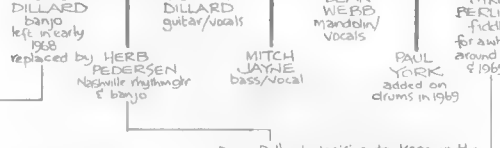
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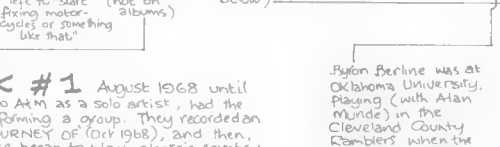
## THE DILLARDS

Early Los Angeles bluegrass group: 1962 - still going strong today. Albums (all on Elektra except the last one - on Anthem/UA): 'BACK PORCH BLUEGRASS' April 1965, 'LIVE - ALMOST' August 1965, 'PICKIN' AND FIDDLIN' February 1966, 'WHATSTRAW SITS' December 1966, 'COPPERFIELDS' 1970, 'ROOTS AND BRANCHES' 1972.



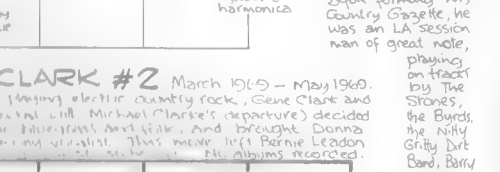
## THE DILLARDS

Doug Dillard, desiring to keep up the bluegrass-ethnic feel of the Dillards, left the group when they decided that country and contemporary music was more important. Her brother, Pedersen, replaced him, but got tired of touring and wished to play music part time only - so he joined Country Gazette (see below).



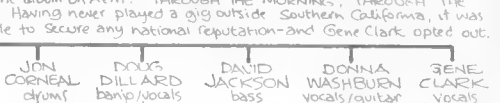
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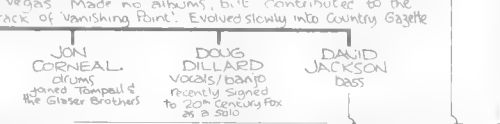
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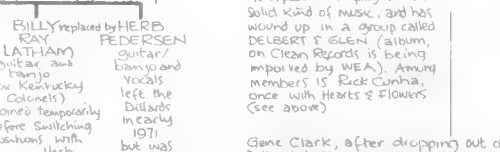
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## DILLARD & the EXPEDITION

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DON

which also included Chris Hillman in its ranks, around Spring 1964. Bernie also went up to LA about that time, and hung around with them for a month or so, "but I was only 17 at the time and decided to go to Florida with my father, who had got a position teaching at a university there. So I went off to Florida and stayed there until 1967, when I felt the urge to get back out to California, and I packed all my stuff into a Volkswagen and drove the 3000 miles all by myself".

In LA, he joined Larry's country group, Hearts & Flowers, who played all the folkie haunts in Southern California; the Ash Grove, the Troubadour, McCabe's, the Ice House and so on... but the days of the group were numbered and enthusiasm for continuing in that particular combination was on the wane.

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Coincidental with the eventual demise of Hearts & Flowers, Bernie happened to cross paths with Douglas Dillard, banjo wizard and bluegrass maniac extraordinaire, who was at a bit of a loose end. He'd left the Dillards earlier that year (1968) after six years on the road with them, because he wasn't happy with the way that contemporary music and humour were superseding bluegrass as their staple, and he'd done a few gigs with the Byrds - but he was on the look out for a new group. "Hearts & Flowers pooped out and so I moved in with Doug and we just played and played for weeks on end... and Gene Clark was dropping by and playing along too. Finally Gene, who had signed a solo contract with A&M Records, had the idea of roping Doug in too and they became a group... Dillard & Clark. Not long after that, we recorded the album, 'The Fantastic Expedition'".



RANDY

Brothers.

\*\*\*\*\*

The history of the Flying Burrito Brothers is very weird and very complicated; even in late '67, there was a loose group of musicians living in Topanga Canyon and calling themselves the FBB. In a motley collection including Ed Freeman (then a folksinger/Barry and the Remains roadie/member of a group called the Joyful Noise, and now Don McLean's producer), Bruce Langhorne (famous for his playing behind Dylan, Fred Neil etc) and Pete Childs (ditto, and also in the Joyful Noise), were Ian Dunlop and someone called Mickey (both of whom had already been in and out of the International Submarine Band by then) and Barry Tashian and Billy Briggs (both remnants from the Boston group, Barry and the Remains, who toured America as a support band with the Beatles and may have stayed in LA at the end of it). It was the last four who were masquerading as the Flying Burrito Brothers, though the group never recorded and seemed to disappear without a trace. (You can read more about this prototype Flying Burrito Brothers in the sleeve-note to 'The Last of the Red Hot Burritos').

A year later the name was resurrected by Gram Parsons and Chris Hillman, both of whom had left the Byrds in a state of intense dissatisfaction (see appropriate forthcoming chapter), and a year later, Bernie Leadon rolled up in an effort to inject a little stability and enthusiasm into the group, which was staggering about (according to various interviews with Sneaky Pete, Gram Parsons and Chris Hillman) in a state of apathy, undisciplined juvenility and squabbling tension.

Bernie arrived in time to contribute his playing, singing and writing to

Jeff Hanna (see Zigzag 28) had left Linda's group to reform The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, so Bernie filled the vacancy, picking guitar behind Miss Ronstadt for a couple of national tours until, returning to LA once more, he was invited to join the Flying Burrito



GLENN

'Burrito Deluxe' and later to the third album 'The Flying Burrito Brothers', but after one and a half years of plugging away without the band increasing in stature or maturity he decided to quit them too. "I was just fed up, I suppose... I felt that by staying, I was restricting my abilities - I wanted to try and broaden my techniques to a greater degree than my role in the Burritos allowed."

The Burritos hadn't taken off as they'd planned when they'd formed at the end of 1968... all the fancy dressing up and publicity was to no avail, and as the months went by, the initial excitement and optimism gradually dimmed until, as Stephen Stills said, "they couldn't draw flies, let alone a big crowd." Its reputation as a vehicle for creativity and musicianship had really begun to wind down and in the seven months between April and October 1968, Sneaky Pete, Bernie Leadon, Chris Hillman, Al Perkins and Michael Clarke all left the band in search of greener grass. "Sometimes we'd do awful shows; it used to get real embarrassing... we just couldn't be counted on to do a bang-up gig".

\*\*\*\*\*

While in the Burritos, Bernie (together with Chris Hillman, and Sneaky Pete), played on an album called 'Barry McGuire and the Doctor', after bumping into McGuire and (Doctor) Eric Hord at A&M studios. This album was recorded in 1970, though Barry McGuire's vocal abilities don't seem to have improved since his 'Eve of Destruction' days five years earlier, but the music, particularly on a track called 'Too much city', is exceptional. (This album is now deleted, but there are loads of copies in the current Woolworth's sale, so rush out and buy one - can't be bad at 72p). "Barry

was a real hippie - really believed all the hippy thing... made a great deal of money and gave it all away. He used to live in a psychedically painted VW bus, and just drive around barefoot and tanned, full of 'I love you', you know? He's a really fine dude though - crazy but beautiful. Those sessions were so loose... It took hours to get the tracks down because no-one could remember the arrangements, but it all came out OK." Too right - great stuff.

\*\*\*\*\*

Anyway, back to the main story; Bernie threw the towel in July 1971, left the Burritos and looked around to see what was going on of interest... and he happened to wander down to Disneyland to see his old employer, Linda Ronstadt, who was doing a week of gigs there. He was invited to pick along with her band, which included Glen Frey on guitar and Don Henley on drums, and so he did.

During that same week, but on a different night, Randy Meisner also came loping along and, at Linda's invitation, played along on bass.

\*\*\*\*\*

Randy Meisner's family lived in Nebraska and it was there that he first joined a group, the Dynamics, in 1962 at the age of 15. He stayed with them for a while, but realising it was a bit of a blind alley, moved to Colorado and joined a group called the Poor. Randy: "We did as many local gigs as we could for a few years, but then decided to move to Los Angeles and become a super original folk-rock group. Charlie Greene & Brian Stone (who also had Sonny & Cher and the Buffalo Springfield) did some recordings with us but they didn't come to anything and we ended up the same way we'd arrived - with nothing. I think maybe we tried to be too original and it just didn't quite work out - we didn't



BERNIE

hit them hard enough... and so, with prospects looking pretty bleak for the Poor, I left to join Poco after Miles Thomas, our roadie, who knew Richie Furay, had suggested me as a possible bass player for his (Richie's) new group. I stayed with Poco for almost a year before I decided to leave them too."

"There were various reasons for my leaving, but I finally quit over the final mix of the album; I wanted to be present to make my suggestions, but Richie and Jim (Messina) said they were going to do it and that we'd have to wait and listen to it later... so, rather too hastily, I suppose, I quit because I thought that if we were a group we should all have a hand in it. Looking back, I'm more pleased with the way the album ('Pickin' up the pieces') came out, but at the time, I wanted a stronger drum/bass sound... I wasn't very experienced, so maybe Jim was doing the right thing in keeping me out and going for an overall sound".

"Having left Poco, I was ready to give up, but then Rick Nelson called and asked me to join his band, so I went with him; he'd seen Poco playing at the Troubadour and that had given him the idea of getting a new group together... he'd got real buzzed by hearing us play that kind of music like that. I played on 'Rick Nelson in Concert', came over to Europe to do a military tour, and then when we got back, I quit, because I didn't feel that I was getting any opportunity to express myself; it wasn't anyone's fault, because it obviously had to be Rick Nelson and his group rather than just being a group with all the members having equal status... I mean, Rick always consulted us and we all made suggestions, but even so, I wasn't really happy with



the music, so I left and returned to Nebraska for eight months."

Working in a tractor factory was even less appealing and made Randy realise that music was, after all, a better proposition - so he returned to Rick Nelson's group after his second replacement had fallen by the wayside.

"Allen Kemp called me and told me the job was open again and so I went back to LA and rejoined Rick for another six months or so before John Boylan, who produced both Rick and Linda Ronstadt, got me to fill in on one of Linda's gigs in San Francisco which her regular bass player couldn't make for some reason.... so I did that for a couple of nights, and that's where Glenn and I met and discovered that we got on pretty well playing together".

In fact, it was John Boylan, once half of the Appletree Theatre and also producer of the Dillards as well as Linda and Rick, who had the initial idea for the Eagles. Bernie: "He is also Linda's manager and has helped to put her bands together over the last few years - so we all knew him from the times we played on her records or in her groups. He always liked all of us as individuals and apparently he sat down one day, figured out our capabilities, and came to the conclusion that, on paper, it would be hard to put together a better band. Of course, that was 'on paper', which doesn't really mean a thing, because, like I said, no good how the components of a band may be as individual musicians, it's no use them playing together and expecting good results unless there are no personality hang-ups. Anyway, at his suggestion, or rather, his insistence, we got together not long after that Disneyland gig and it just seemed to come together from there..... we wrote and played and sang and had a good time and everything was great".

Glenn Frey, who I didn't get a chance to talk to, had arrived in LA from Detroit and formed a folkie sort of duo with John David Souther some five years ago but, commercially it was a disaster and it withered away after recording an album on Amos, a Los Angeles label owned by ex-rock and roller Jimmy Bowen. Glenn, however, had wound up contracted to David Geffin's management company and suggested that the Eagles present themselves and their ideas to Geffin, who was in the throes of launching his own record company, established on the proceeds of his working with Laura Nyro and CSN&Y.

This they did, and though there was nothing of any staggering magnitude in their music so far, it was evident that the fruits of the union would flower if given the chance - they were, after all, experienced musicians with solid knowledge and interesting ideas and not just a bunch of punks off the street.... so he signed them up and packed them off to play a month of gigs at the Gallery in Aspen Colorado (no doubt the American equivalent of 'getting it together in a country cottage, man!')

Randy: "The Gallery was a small (held maybe 500, packed in solid) dance bar, where everybody just danced and drank until they fell down.... It was fantastic.... everybody had a great time. We did four sets a night for a month, playing as many originals as we'd written - to work them up ready for the album - and filled out with just about every other song we knew

.... loads of Chuck Berry, some Neil Young songs and all sorts of other things from the other groups we'd played in. It tightened the group up pretty well; we learned how to play with each other, and then we went on to a club in Boulder, which is where Glyn Johns came to see us.... it was exam week, so the place wasn't very full, but Glyn liked us anyway".

\*\*\*\*\*  
Within weeks of their first album being released, the Eagles became national stars, thereby justifying Geffin's faith in their abilities as well as giving him a speedy return on his investment, and although their immediate success was partly attributable to the charismatic aspect of the Geffin/Asylum/Jackson Browne/right place-right time elements, the performance and concept of the music was obviously by far and away the most important clincher.

Harking back, momentarily to the Burritos, I really love some of the tracks they recorded, and I'm sure the musicianship was no less excellent than that of the Eagles.... so where did the difference lie?

Bernie: "In the Burritos, everyone had just as much talent, but it was difficult to make the best possible use of it with that combination of people. Suppose you and I are in a group; say I'm trying to play a certain style.... the more you want me to play that way and do it well, the more I'll try and be inspired, if you like. But if you discourage me, or even show a bit of doubt or hesitation - then I'll close up and it won't happen. The relationship is that delicate; either everyone is totally in accord, or else nobody plays anywhere near 100% of their potential. Sneaky is an incredible steel player, Chris Hillman is just amazing on bass, but their performances could and would have been so much better if there hadn't been the personality conflicts and differences of ideas in the band.... I mean, I didn't do as well as I could have, either."

"None of us in the Eagles have ever been in the limelight, but we're strong well-rounded backing musicians and our ideas run parallel rather than crossing each other. Glenn and I have both had a lot of experience on rhythm guitar, and I think that's maybe the key to our being able to switch lead/rhythm roles.... neither of us felt that we were the lead guitarist - it's a different attitude altogether. This band is the greatest challenge I've ever faced, musically, but at the same time, it's the first band I've been in where there are no downers; the management's an upper, the music's an upper, the producer's an upper, the road crew's an upper.... there is no trace of depression floating around."

Why, I wondered, did they come all the way to London to record.... why not do it in LA?

"We wanted a producer who could handle the folkie stuff and the rock n' roll, and we wanted the best person we could find.... so names like Glyn Johns, Tom Dowd, Bill Halverson, Ted Templeman - people who'd had a history of producing the same range of music as we were into - names like that came to mind.... and Glyn was the first choice. I wasn't familiar with some of the stuff he'd done, like the Steve Miller things, but the other guys were, and were very up on it, so

he came over to see us, but thought we weren't ready then.... so we met again some months later, talked it over, and eventually came over to England and cut the album in three weeks - he's the hardest working son of a bitch I've ever met.... never lets up for a moment. He's a perfectionist, if you like, and as well as being a producer, he's one of the best engineers in the world - he'd just get the sound straight away.... there's no communication gaps in the studio.... same as there's no communication gaps at Asylum; David Geffin runs the record company, with the consultation of Elliot Roberts, and Elliot and John Hartman run the management company with the consultation of David".

"The album sold nearly 400,000 copies, 'Take it Easy' sold 650,000 singles, 'Witchy Woman' sold another 650,000, and a third single off the same album, 'Peaceful easy feeling', is in the charts now - number 22 with a bullet - so things are looking good."

"You see, when David Geffin signed us, he didn't have any similar bands; he had Jo Jo Gunne, who were an out and out rock band, but we were the only folkie rock band - so he was willing to go out on a limb for us and concentrate his efforts.... he saw the potential and gave us living expenses until such time as the band could support itself - and we're in the black already, of course. In the case of Dillard and Clark, we made the first album for around twenty thousand dollars, but though the record company made their bread back, the sales weren't high enough to bring the group any money. So we had to support ourselves entirely on gigs, which weren't too wonderful."

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Don Henley has also experienced some ups and downs over the past ten years - first in a dixieland jazz band, then in a group called Felicity which evolved into another group called Shiloh around 1970 - throughout which time he was lead vocalist as well as drummer.

For years, they were content to chug around Texas doing local gigs, until, concluding that going to LA was the only way to get beyond local group status, they moved to the coast in May 1970 and recorded an album for the (very same) Amos label - with fellow Texan Kenny Rogers producing. "It didn't sell, but then, it wasn't that good.... the songs weren't any good, the production was terrible - in fact, we knew before we made it that it would turn out awful. After that, we just bumbled along, managed by Kenny Rogers' wife, who'd never managed anyone before, and our spirits just got lower and lower - until Al Perkins left to take up an offer to join the Burritos, and the band split up. No one was particularly sad to see this happen; the record hadn't sold, the band wasn't doing anything and we were all flat broke."

Blimey, I've run out of space - that's what comes of taking up too much room with photographs. Never mind, you can sort things out from the family tree I hope, and I'll have to leave all the other stuff (like the geography/musicians' colony of LA, and all about the songs on the first album) for another time.... I haven't even left any room to tell you how great their new album is. (Nothing else to do but sack myself for incompetence). Pete

First of all, my apologies for failing to contribute a column last time. I can only give two explanations: first, I didn't really believe that two issues could emerge so close to each other - it was almost as if each issue was a child of the previous one (a very lame grovelling excuse!). Secondly, being a "dapper man about town", which is how I was described last time, takes a lot of doing if you are the prototype Zigzag shape.... that is, somewhat overweight, particularly round the gut region, and tending to spend rather too much time in grubby back street shops searching for golden goodies. As "dapper" means neat and precise, which even my family would dispute, I've spent a lot of time cleaning my nails, armpits and nose in order to live up to my unrequested and undeserved epithet. "About town" means not what you think, but rather, being a lot nearer to the hub of the record company metropolis than those fools out there in the wastelands of Bucks County. At least I'm close enough to be able to beat my way through the crowds swirling and funneling into the Bank underground station around 5.30 and arrive at places like WEA, UA, RCA and CBS just in time to force the unfortunates there, about to go home, to take off their overcoats again and listen to my demands about what they should re-release. "Look out, here comes Tobler" they cry, as they hurtle themselves out of alternative doorways in an effort to avoid me. (After all that, we've dropped the "Dapper man about town" in favour of a more suitable description.... "The Weybridge Knit" - let's see him talk his way out of that one).

Enough of that, and to the point of the column, which is really no more than a list of my favourite records of the moment, embellished with my observations and comments (and made less readable as a result of the constant interjection by typist Carole - the Cherry Wainer of the Aylesbury suburbs). And it's straight off into a complaint: if Chuck Berry can't do anything better than the distressingly bad singles he's inflicted on us of late, he should certainly give up. I'm almost inclined to suggest he be locked up for cruelty to his art, exemplified on his two double re-issues 'Golden Decades Vols 1 and 2', recorded in the days when he was a king. Or he could at least grow old gracefully - like, say, the Everly Brothers or Neil Sedaka, both of whom manage to retain their dignity. Don and Phil's new album is as nice as their mid 60s stuff at least, and Neil Sedaka is enjoying a splendid renaissance with songs like 'Beautiful You', which was surprisingly made at Manchester with the help of the wonderboys of Strawberry Studios (also known as 10 cc and Hotlegs). I went to see Neil at 'The Talk of the Town' - would you believe? (yes, you dapper etc) - and despite having to wait three quarters of an hour for our meal (ten of us each ordered different dishes, and they eventually arrived - all the same!), the extremely claustrophobic conditions (six people expected to sit and eat in a space four feet square, which might have been possible, were it not for the four feet by two feet table), and the horrendous floor show, Neil was superb.... interspersing a medley of his old hits, complete with backing tapes to reproduce the authenticity of the early 60s vocal backing sound, with some fine new songs. Watch out for



his new album 'Solitaire' - really good stuff.

On with some nice albums you may have missed. 'American Spring' was an album you should have heard - by Mrs B. Wilson and her sister - whilst her old man's bunch, The Beach Boys have a great new one in 'Holland'. Colin Blunstone's album is really excellent.... don't judge him or his band by the pace of his singles - they're just the ballad part of a raving show. Get to see him before the States snap him up, and the sight of Pete 'Crazy Legs' Wingfield destroying his piano will never again be seen within these shores. On the subject of Colin Blunstone, there's going to be a double album by the Zombies released soon: one half being the grossly neglected 'Odyssey & Oracle' and the rest unissued stuff.

Predictably, I've also enjoyed the latest works from Poco, the Doobie Brothers, Rory Gallagher, Ry Cooder and Rita Coolidge, and I'm looking forward to a fine new series about to steal out of the WEA offices, featuring such essentials as the first Buffalo Springfield album (released here for the first time in stereo), 'Roots' by the Everly Brothers, a great live LP by King Curtis, and, eventually (when problems of the tape for 'Number 14' are sorted out), my compilation album by Love.... I'm pretty proud of that, and for £1.49, not bad at all. (I hope you all rush out and buy it, or WEA might never listen to any of my ideas again!)

Continuing on the subject (one of my favourites) of re-issues, I've been involved with Polydor in their series of golden oldies called 'Carats'. So far, 3 volumes have been put out, two of Roulette stuff and one of MGM, and they give an interesting perspective of the development of pop music. I'd hoped to have a hand in further compilations, but I appear to have been fired! Ah well, that's showbiz! But, I'm now working on re-issues of some of the old Buddah/Kama Sutra stuff, starting with doublebeaks of the first 4 Spoonful albums at what I hope will be a bargain price.

Then to a few newies. Among the records which have caressed my ear recently are the first albums by Brian Cole & his New Hovering Dog, Bull Dog, the excellent Country Gazette, a motley crew named Coulson Dean McGuinness & Flint, and a new name to solo albums (though he's been instrumental in the success of a few others), Curt Boetcher, who has put together a fantastic album here....

guaranteed to bolster the 'keep Elektra on top' campaign.

On the established favourites scene it's good to see the usual excellent performances by Dr Hook, Lou Reed, Ricky Nelson, Roy Orbison, Al Kooper, Elton John, Gordon Lightfoot, and 2 albums by Duane Allman (his anthology and a very old thing featuring him and his brother). Also nice to see 'The Best of Jerry Reed' and the new Elvis double.... Presley seems to be moving nearer and nearer to his old time greatness again - which is a bloody good thing.... he's taxed us with lark's vomit for far too long.

Nicky and I went to see Focus at Guildford (our local gig) and found them a bit yes and a bit no. Jan Akkerman is obviously a guitar hero, smoking what looks like a Woodbine and drinking brown ale out of the bottle, then doing either Hank Marvin imitations or lightning fast finger burning bursts. I reckon that too much of their material is down to clever-clever stuff.... the 3 minute songs have considerably more impact and I really like both their hit singles, which stay in the mind just like 'Walk Don't Run' did all those years ago. What praise could be greater? While on the subject of guitar heroes, isn't it great to see Eric Clapton back on the boards? And 2 more guitar men on the horizon.... Dave Edmunds returns in triumph with a really rich single, and there's a guy you should look out for called Andy Latimer - he plays in Camel (the Peter Bardens band) and uses his guitar like a paint brush rather than a nuclear missile. Need I say more?

Back to records and back again to re-issues. Good on Phonogram (or Philips to us) for their Chess 'Golden Decade' series, already mentioned with reference to Chuck Berry, but also of great interest to anyone wanting to find out about Bo Diddley, Billy Stewart or Little Milton.

The success of Carly 'Nipples' Simon is well deserved and an extreme gratification to all those who liked her in her earlier efforts. I thought she was destined to snatch Judy Collins' title as 'First Lady of Elektra', but somebody's obviously told Judy, who has come up with her best album since 'Who Knows Where The Time Goes', my favourite Collins LP. In the same bag, as we say, is John Denver (but can he juggle?), who has 3 really good albums available. If you like 'Take me home, country roads', hear the original and far superior version on Denver's 'Poems Prayers & Promises' LP. A JHT certified bona-fide recommendation.

Getting near the end... let me just say go and see Harvey Andrews if you get a chance - a very moving cat - and watch out for the re-entry of John Dummer, currently heading a bunch of weirdos called The Oobie Doobie Band.... an interview on him and all the superstars who've played in his bands is coming soon.

Finally, let me say that the most enjoyable live gig I've seen for ages was The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band's press reception. They were quite brilliant and their music is unbelievable in its range and quality.... why, even Tony Blackburn (wash your mouth out) made 'Some of Shelley's Blues' his record of the week recently. It's a fabulous track, despite that. They're coming back to do a full tour soon, so try and catch them if you can. Until then, Zigzag loves you. John



# A CONVERSATION WITH JOHNNY SPEIGHT

ZZ: Could I start by asking how you first started writing?

JS: How I started writing? With a paper and pencil. No, actually I started on a typewriter with two keys missing... It's amazing how much you need those two keys - you realise that when you have to go through the manuscript filling in the gaps with a pencil. First of all, I did some short stories and working class dramas... short stories when I came back from the pub - the routine that any writer goes through. You feel you want to be a writer, and you start writing... and, being a socialist, I was heavily influenced by socialist writers and I began to write what I thought were working class dramas. If I saw them now, I'd imagine I'd consider them absolute crap. But I was influenced by people like Shaw and Gorki and Chekhov; in fact, one little play which I wrote, heavily influenced by Chekhov, was submitted to the Arts Theatre and they kept it for about 6 years. I don't know whether they were hopefully going to produce it or whether they just forgot all about it - maybe they just put it in some drawer and happened to find it when they were cleaning it out one day, but they had it for 6 years.

The first work I actually got paid for was on a radio show called 'Mr Ros and Mr Ray' - it was a band show with Edmundo Ros and Ray Ellington, and I wrote five or six gags for it each week. It was a replacement for 'The Billy Cotton Band Show', on Sundays, but we did it for 13 weeks, and then Billy Cotton came back for ever.

ZZ: About what year would that be?

JS: That would be about 1950 something, 56 probably. After that, I went on to 'The Frankie Howerd Show' on the radio, working with Johnny Antrobus, Terry Nation and Dick Barry, and then my first breakthrough, I suppose, was Arthur Haynes, who was the first comic I'd met. He'd just come from variety, low down on the bill then I think, and had no television image or anything. I started writing sketches for him, and that was my first real writing, 'The Arthur Haynes Show', where we created characters like the two tramps, him and Dermot, and the little flat-capped working man came out of that too. I think that was a great show, and Arthur one of the great comics... underestimated, but one of the really great television comics.

During that period I wrote some plays too; 'The Compartment' and 'The Playmates', which went down well with the critics and things, and then I did a three act play called 'The Knacker's Yard'.

ZZ: That, to use the cliché, was before its time really, wasn't it? It was black comedy, wasn't it?

JS: It was before its time, yes, and it was underestimated by the critics of the day, who immediately labelled it Pinterish, because it had come just after 'The Caretaker'. In fact, it was written before 'The Caretaker', but it was held over in production because Peter Sellers went mad about it and wanted to do it. Of course, just about every management in the country wanted to grab Peter Sellers, and I should have known that to get Peter Sellers to do a play in the theatre was almost asking God to come down again or for Jesus to be re-incarnated, anyway. The play, when it did reach the stage, got mixed notices; the raves were raves and the ones who hated it, hated it. The audience loved it, really loved it, but to transfer it from The New Arts would have meant cutting a lot of the scenes, and I wouldn't do it. I didn't see the point, and I was reasonably successful as a writer and with Arthur on television, so I could afford to say "No, it won't be altered".

ZZ: What was your relationship with Haynes, because English comedians are notoriously unadventurous really, aren't they?

JS: Well, I got on marvellously with Arthur. The only thing I found with him was that each time he went away to do a summer season, he had one foot in variety, and it took me a little time to get him back to pure television again - but he took to it like a duck takes to water. He was, in fact, one of the few comics who were adventurous and I think we would have gone a lot further had it not been for the Grades, I think really. I'd worked for a long time to develop Arthur into storyline, but each time we got near it, it was Lew who said "Why spoil a successful format?", and kept it to the successful format of two sketches, two quickies and a singer.

ZZ: I was going to ask you about that, because it was made for ATV and you rowed with them just before Arthur's

death, didn't you?

JS: No... there was no row. What happened was that someone at ATV decided that I wasn't a fit writer for Arthur Haynes, and they talked him into doing a half hour situation comedy written by some other people... but he never did it because he died before it came about. But the show, 'Sam and Janet', turned out to be the most enormous flop on television. While all this was happening, Dennis Main Wilson had asked me to write a Comedy Playhouse for the BBC, and I got the chance to write about a working class family, which is what I would've written for Arthur if we'd ever gone into storyline... and that was called 'Til Death Us Do Part'.

This Comedy Playhouse got a fantastic reception from the critics, except for one person, the Mirror's Kenneth Eastow, whose name we shan't mention, who said it was flogging a dead horse. As a result of its success, we got a series immediately and it was the third show of the first series, a show called 'Sex Before Marriage', which caused controversy all over the country and turned the series into a huge success. The punters loved it, it was getting big figures and critical acclaim... it was away.

ZZ: You yourself come from Canning Town; is this why the opening credits are shown over film of that area?

JS: Well, it's around Wapping really, but yes, we wanted to film it in the East End. Actually, there's an interesting story attached to the name "Garnett". The man was originally going to be called Alf Ramsey, but we realised that this was also the name of England's football team manager... of course, if it had just been the one Comedy Playhouse thing it wouldn't have been so bad, but as it turned out, it's just as well we changed it to Garnett. What happened was we were in Wapping, filming in a street called Garnett Street... so he became Alf Garnett.

ZZ: How many 'Til Death Us Do Part' episodes have you written to date?

JS: Altogether, about 34.

ZZ: And how do you go about writing, do you work to a schedule?

JS: Well, yes, I have a kind of schedule like most writers do... I tell my-

self I'll start at 9 in the morning, but often I don't. That blank sheet of paper is the longest walk of the day, and I welcome distractions which may prevent me from actually getting down to work, but once you start, it's hard to leave off, especially if it's flowing. I suppose my system is to work while it's coming, all day long and sometimes all night too.

ZZ: You're living in Northwood now, so do you write about the East End life from memory?

JS: No, not all memory really. The rhythms of language spoken in the East End, like Garnett's language, are inside me for ever... I speak it like I breathe. It's like golf swing; if you learn as a kid, it's there all your life.

ZZ: So it's all authentic dialogue?

JS: Yeah. People say I have this gift for authentic dialogue, but to me, I can't understand why everyone can't do it... writing that kind of dialogue comes naturally to me. The ideas that I put into Garnett's mouth, though, are often ideas I got while listening to people in middle class Northwood. I can go to the local pub and hear them talking, and they're all Garnetts... and some are even worse than what Alf is. Some of the things they would do to certain people... and they are people without an excuse for it. Let's face it, Alf was dragged up in Wapping without any formal education, but some of these people I hear talking like Alf have been to public school and university. Garnett is not just expressing

the thoughts of people living in Wapping, he is expressing a good part, I would say, the majority of this country unfortunately.

ZZ: Peter Cook once accused you of laughing at people. For instance, working people use lines from your comedy, say, "you stupid coon" and they mean it. You might have used it to laugh at people, but they use it in an almost Powellite way. Would you say this is a valid argument?

JS: I don't think it's a valid argument at all. I have never laughed at coons unless they were funny coons... I've never laughed at anybody unless they were funny, in fact. I don't want to get involved in a slugging match with Peter Cook, but all his comedy is laughing at people. I mean, he takes the piss out of people that are not as bright as he is, and he does it very well too... I think he's very funny. Both he and Dudley take the piss out of people... a lot of comedy is taking the piss out of people.

ZZ: Is there anything you wouldn't make fun of?

JS: No, I haven't found anything yet that I couldn't make fun of. I think there is nothing too sacred for comedy... anything we do to each other is either tragic or funny. At the time it's being done, it may be very tragic and it may be best to stay away from it for a little bit because some people are very sensitive if you show the foolishness of what they've done too early... they're likely to turn round

and lynch you or punch your nose. If you wait a while, however, the safer you are.

ZZ: So when do you choose to make fun of it?

JS: When I can. If I hear two idiots talking a load of crap in a pub, and they're big fellows, I'm not going to laugh at them there and then... I'll wait till I get home and then laugh about it and maybe even write about it.

ZZ: You talk of dropping into pubs in Northwood and places... how do they view you there?

JS: I suppose they view me as a sort of celebrity; you see, my face is known as well as my name around there. It used to be, that my name was fairly well known throughout the country, but not my face... but now my face is getting to be well known - too well known, in fact. I started to get a few threatening letters during the last series... I was getting a bit worried.

When people didn't recognise me or know who I was, I used to be able to do things like roll up at a pub with casual clothes on, and maybe a few days growth of beard where I hadn't shaved because I was writing and just didn't want to shave... and I might see someone I knew engaged in conversation with perhaps a business acquaintance who didn't know me, and I'd see a look of confusion cross his face as I said to my friend "hello, buy me a drink". He'd wonder what an obviously well educated, rich gentleman was doing talking to and buying drinks for this Cockney louse... but





later he'd see me going out to the car park and getting into my Rolls Royce and a look of respect would come into his face - not for me, but for the Rolls. One friend told me that that happened once, and this fellow asked him who I was; and my friend replied that I was a successful rag and bone merchant, which, I suppose, was more credible to him than saying I was a writer.

ZZ: Looking back over the Garnetts, do you have a particular favourite?

JS: Well, I must say that I enjoyed them all; I don't think we've done a bad one yet, which isn't a bad average out of 34. Arthur Haynes used to say, in the days when we did a run of 13 shows, that if we did 5 good ones we were away, or even if we did 4 good ones, because they would be the ones that the viewers would remember after the series was finished. Fortunately, I don't think we did too many bad ones either, of the Arthur Haynes.

ZZ: At one time, 'Til Death Us Do Part' was going to end, wasn't it? You wanted to end it, and the actors wanted to end it?

JS: Yes, on the very last one, we were heavily censored. Not only did they cut the script to pieces, but they even had some tame vicar re-writing it. Other reasons were that the cast weren't getting on, though this was mainly through having to work in filthy dirty rehearsal rooms which were freezing cold in the Winter and too hot in the Summer. . . . there were clashes of ego and temperaments, and Warren was terrified of being typecast as Garnett, but he finally realised that he could play Garnett and still do other things, and we all came back together again, primarily because Dandy Nichols wanted to do another series. . . . she was the one who first brought the idea up, and when we asked around, everyone wanted to do another one.

ZZ: Was there any censorship on that series?

JS: On the last series, no, there was none at all. In fact, Lord Hill apologised to Mary Whitehouse for things that were in 'Til Death Us Do Part', things that hadn't been taken out or censored.

ZZ: Do you think it'll get harder as you go along?

JS: That really depends on the moral backbone of the BBC. I'm doing another series and have got to keep up the same standards, but Garnett's still got to talk and there's a lot for him to talk about at the moment, so I can see it's quite likely to offend the same people it offended before. . . . I don't think they've evolved to any higher level of intelligence since the last series, so it's really up to the BBC, how they feel about it and how they're going to react to any attacks on it.

ZZ: How did you view 'All in the Family'? The business of the Garnett idea going to America, becoming a great success and being brought back here?

JS: Yes, that was the only reason it was bought for English television. . . . because it was the best show in America; if you're going to buy American shows, why not buy the top show and not the crap. . . . that seems an obvious

thing to do. I can't understand why they didn't buy more episodes, though I suppose the reason was that they didn't want too much of 'All in the Family' and 'Til Death Us Do Part' on the same channel. I think 'All in the Family' was a good show; they did it well, the Americans, although I don't think it goes anywhere near as far as our's goes. . . . but then you have to remember that England is far and away culturally superior to the Americans - always has been and, I hope, always will be. We the British public, can accept more than the Americans can - if we can keep down these 'clean-up' people, who are trying to reduce us to the level of the Americans. After all, America is a new country compared with us; they have no philosophy, no god except the dollar, and you can name all the great American writers on the fingers of one hand. No doubt about it, we are a far superior nation to the Americans.

ZZ: You mentioned a further series of 'Garnett'; when will that appear?

JS: It will open up the BBC's Autumn schedules, and will run for 7 weeks.

ZZ: What else are you writing, or preparing at the moment?

JS: I'm preparing ideas with Dennis Main Wilson, sorting out the publication of 8 of the scripts we've done, and I'm writing a kind of biography for Michael Josephs.

ZZ: Biography or autobiography?

JS: Yeah, autobiography, though by the time I've finished it, it may indeed be a biography. . . . it's a kind of autobiography of the East End and me and my background, really.

ZZ: But television will continue to be your main market?

JS: Yes. I want to write a film, but at the moment there seems no way of being able to write the sort of film I want to while the present idiots are in control of the film world. The other thing I want to do is some theatre, but I love television because it's so immediate; you do it, and it goes out. . . . and it has a bigger audience - and I'm a bit of a propergandist.

ZZ: Which authors are you reading now?

JS: I'm re-reading Shaw, and any others that are around. . . . but I find that there aren't that many around that I wish to read, except playwrights like Beckett, who I like very much.

ZZ: What appeals to you about him?

JS: It's . . . well, to be honest, nothing appeals - there is nothing appealing about Beckett. I think he hits a lot of truths right down to the bone, but he is very depressive. . . . there is no hope in Beckett at all.

ZZ: So you still read Shaw?

JS: I've never stopped reading Shaw. . . . he changed my life. Before I became a writer, I was a jazz drummer, an average illiterate jazz drummer, and I was going through a strange phase at that time; a friend of mine, a tenor player, and I were fans of John Steinbeck, who's writing, particularly 'Of Mice And Men', had captured my imagination. We were working down at Clacton and, both of us having just read 'Of Mice And Men', were looking for and finding Steinbeck characters in the streets of Clacton. . . . "Christ,

another Steinbeck character!" we'd say. In our own way, without realising it, we were just complimenting Steinbeck on drawing his characters from life. We were doing it the other way: fitting real live people to those in his writing - so we got the message without knowing it. . . . that he was a great writer who lifted his characters right out of the streets. Anyway, I remember I was in Canning Town public library looking for a book to read; I'd read some Steinbeck and was on the look out for some other good books. . . . and I found this shelf full of books by Bernard Shaw. When he was alive, he was always being quoted in the papers. . . . things he'd said, and I got the impression that he must be a comic - someone like Tommy Trinder - and I made a mental note to try and catch his act somewhere if I could. Then, there I was faced with all these Bernard Shaw books, and I thought "Christ, he writes as well!"

One by one I read all his work - I used to take them on sessions with me, to read in the breaks, and I remember a guitarist turning up and saying "You like all that weird stuff, don't you?" So I said "Yeah", because in those days, 'weird' was a big word in the jazz world. . . . anything good or not quite understandable, you called 'weird'. For instance, Gillespie had come along by then and he was 'weird', and Parker was 'weird', but anyway, this fellow came along and was saying "You like these weird writers" - so I began to read books by other 'weird' writers, like Ibsen and Chekhov and Sean O'Casey, and they changed my life completely.

ZZ: What did you learn from Shaw?

JS: He gave me colossal confidence, gave me the feeling that all the things I thought about life were right and that I wasn't the outsider I thought I was. I felt that I was right and the rest were wrong, because here was a man of obvious learning saying the same sort of things that I instinctively felt, but he put them in such a marvellous way. He gave me the impression that you could be what you wanted to be if you had the conviction. Shaw said that the brain is like an athlete's body - if you work at it you can build muscles on it and make it strong, and the more you use it, the stronger it becomes to enable you to face challenges. It's like a half back or forward is able to challenge for the ball and withstand the impact of the tackle. . . . In the same way, he says, the brain can be trained to take mental impact from ideas which might even knock some people out cold. There are some people who are stunned when an idea hits them - they seem to think they've been attacked and violated by this idea.

ZZ: So Shaw led you into comedy?

JS: Well, that's the way it came out - there was no conscious effort. I'd always been knocked out by comics more than serious people; my great favourites were always the Marx Brothers and WC Fields, but Shaw, to me, was purely a comic. . . . he was and still is one of the greatest comic writers that ever lived and Chekhov, again, he was a great comic writer. This, to me, is what comedy is; it's not just writing a few gags for Morecambe & Wise or Ted Ray. . . . it's seeing the comedy that is in life. . . . seeing the idiots at large.

Michael Wale  
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## Puking at the wayside at 5am . . .

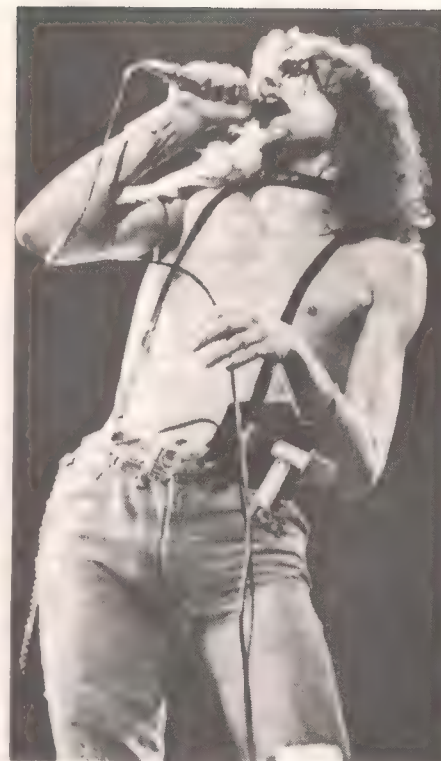
It's not very often that an insignificant paper (in the eyes of most superstars' managers, that is) like Zigzag gets the opportunity to interview someone as important in the international rock world as Jimmy Page. So, when I got up one morning last November with my head feeling as if I'd been locked in a hermetically sealed room and force-fed high volume Black Sabbath music all night, I nevertheless staggered out to meet this musician who's work has given me so much pleasure over the past 8 years or so. A handful of Anadin ought to stave off the ailment for long enough, I thought, and then I'll be able to rush back and collapse into a heap until normal health could be restored. (I don't know what was wrong with me - a chill, I suppose; a sort of head cold linked to a puky feeling in the paunch).

So, I reached the Oxford Street offices of the Zeppelin management, several storeys above one of those Millets shops which always seem to be having a sale, and was welcomed by B.P. Fallon, temporarily acting as press officer for Led Zep, who had arranged the interview. My chat with Jimmy was concluded satisfactorily (it's in ZZ 27), but Beep had also asked me to pop up to Kidderminster with him - to say hello to Robert Plant and maybe to see Silverhead, who were playing at some college in the town. I had agreed a few days earlier, and I reckoned that, ghastly as I felt on the day, I could hardly say "Er, listen, Beep. . . . I don't feel too good today. . . . do you mind if I don't come with you?" He'd have thought his old mate Frame was acting a bit fishy. . . . and besides, I felt a bit better anyway.

So off we went, lurching up the M1 as fast as the hired crank of a car would go, and then negotiating a maze of country byways to arrive at Robert Plant's place, where the evening's revelries were already in full swing. It was rather like the set of one of those King Arthur-type films where the inhabitants of a castle are lying around the banquet hall, having stuffed themselves with lumps of meat and goblets of wine. . . . with modifications, of course. Gene Vincent, Ral Donner and Dion and the Belmonts blared from the giant speakers, and Alsations lay in front of the open log fire, with friends and residents clustered around in the flickering light. Robert himself, clad in a mediaeval style doublet, was exactly opposite to my preconceptions of him. I'd imagined him to be an egotistical monster (for no other reason than my experience with knicker-wetting idols had taught me that most of them inevitably end up as conceited self-declared superhumans), but I was staggered (and delighted) to find him the sort of bloke you could sit and talk to all day and night - he was into all the great West Coast groups, 50's rock n' roll and, in fact, had a pretty encyclopaedic knowledge about the history and development of rock music.

On Beep's suggestion, everybody (including John Bonham, who had also turned up by this time) piled into cars and hurtled off to the Silverhead gig.

We got there in time to witness their pre-gig preparations; out came mascara, tubes of Max Factor face preparation, eye liner, rouge - "for a delicate veil of silky colour, apply



SO  
YOU  
WANT  
TO  
BE  
A  
ROCK  
AND  
ROLL  
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with the fingertips and blend evenly over the face and neck". . . . it was more like the dressing room of the Windmill Theatre. Then on with the satin trousers, silver platform boots, and all that sort of stuff, and finally onto the stage.

Under the pressure of playing to a handful of audience, about half of whom were the Beep/Plant contingent, Silverhead did pretty well; the excitement and fervour of their music could not quite bridge the empty floor and reach the students, watching gingerly from the shadows at the back and sides of the hall, but the musicians, all very accomplished in their own areas, played well, and Michael the singer belted out his vocals in fine showman style. I was impressed by the standard of musical integration, the presentation and the potential, but in my fragile condition thought that the constant high-octane, loud/fast stuff should have been tempered with the occasional slower, quieter and more melodic number.

The gig over, it was back into the Range Rovers and back to Robert's ("We used to play there" says John Bonham, pointing at some cinema in Kidderminster as we flew past, "when me and Robert were in the Band of Joy; we always used to start our set with 'White Rabbit'"), with singer Michael coming along too.

And so, the aforementioned revelry continued into the night. Now, in case you think this is little more than name dropping nonsense, written to show how I hob-nob with all the stars, let me explain:

(i) I did very little hob-nobbing, but spent most of the time shivering in a heap in front of the fire with the dogs.

(ii) The visit was, as it happened, very important to the future development of Silverhead.

Also on the Plant homestead was a second building, largely occupied by various mates (who lived there and presumably fulfilled various functions in the day to day running of the farm) but with one first floor room set aside as a rehearsal hall, complete with drums, amps, speakers and a range of guitars. It was there that Robert had, over the months, been polishing up his guitar playing under the direction, or rather with the assistance, of Robbie Blunt, who was living there and was also present that night - and several hours of jamming (Plant and Blunt on guitars and John Bonham on drums), culminated with Plant on drums (Bonham having staggered off into the dark night), and Blunt and Silverhead's Michael on guitars. Beep, adept with terms like "chemistry", "karma" and "vibe", none of which I am able to handle with ease or aplomb, was later able to put the guitar/personality interplay into perspective.

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The journey home was a nightmare. . . . Beep driving, Michael asleep, and me, delirious and fevered by this time, crumpled up in the back. The horrors of the journey were further heightened by Beep stopping the car on the motorway and dragging us out to confirm his sighting of a UFO. Though I could see nothing but stars and whirling sky, Beep persisted that not only had he seen an extra-terrestrial craft, but that the occupants of this saucer were aware of having been seen and, further, recognised that Beep was "cool" and so there was no danger but, instead,



mutual recognition of friendship and respect. It must've been something he ate.

Leaving the motorway somewhere near Newport Pagnell, I succeeded in misdirecting us to North Marston... and instead, we went in a giant circle, passing the Open University at Bletchley twice, and finally, my delirium, now peppered with little green spacemen, sent me rushing to the grass at the side of the road, where I was violently sick over the silvery moonlit frost.

## "Won't you finance my rock'n'roll band"

When I first saw a photograph of Silverhead, sometime last Summer, I thought to myself "Ugh... there's a group I'll avoid at all costs". My initial was of a glitter band riding the coat tails of a craze and, having read that they were managed by Deep Purple's management and were touring America as Deep Purple's support group, I suspected that they must be some kind of accountant's creation; to either act as a tax loss to divert some of Deep Purple's excessive income, or else to ensure an even greater income by going around as their support band, thereby dispensing with the need to split the gate money with other groups. Another new English group imitating an American group imitating an English group.... just what the world needed!

Months later, at Mike Simmons' house, I happened to notice an import copy of their album. Laughing hysterically at the crude concept and overall cheap vulgarity of the sleeve, I discovered, to my shock, that I knew two of the guys in the band; Nigel, the bass player, used to be in Farm (a Princes Risborough group with an incredibly good singer called Bill Stallwood), who used to play Friars a lot in the heydays of 69/70, and Steve Forrest, one of the guitarists, who was for a while in Mike Simmons' group Shadowfax, which used to practise right here under the thatched roof of Yeoman Cottage!

So, I played the record - which, as it happened, turned out to be thoroughly mediocre.... but that wasn't to be unexpected, since it was thrown together very hastily after the band had formed.

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"So you want to be a rock'n'roll star. Then listen now, to what I say.... Just get an electric guitar. And take some time, learn how to play. And, when your hair's combed right. And your pants fit tight. It's going to be alright!"\*

Michael Des Barres, leader, singer and insigator of Silverhead, a sort of mini Kim Fowley in that he's gauche, loud and totally without modesty, explained all in our subsequent meeting. It appears that he, having aspirations to become a rock'n'roll star, sought the advice of a big name in the rock world, who shall hence be called Captain X (since Michael refused to impart further information other than that he was a "young successful dude"). "I'd written some songs, which I played to him, and because he was into the magic of the rock world rather than the mechanics, he turned me on to this lot" - "this lot" being the managers of Deep Purple and the owners of Purple Records. Captain X shelled out the bread for a band to be assembled from the MM small ads and various other sources and for a demo tape of 6 songs to be

recorded at Olympic - and "this lot" were suitably impressed to sign up the group. One of the songs, appropriately enough, was 'Won't you finance my rock and roll band?'

"Then it's time to go down town. Where the agent man won't let you. Sell your soul to the company (down). Who are waiting there. To sell plastic ware. And, in a week or two, If you make the charts, the girls'll tear you apart!"\*

"From then on, it was rehearsal, album, States, England, Europe...."

Wait a minute; so it was in summer 1972 that Michael got the bee in his bonnet, and within weeks the group (auditioned at Studio 51, where in my nuttier days I spent many hours digging the Downliners Sect) was together and signed up. Did the management offer any advice in the way of image, music, direction, etc? "No, they just said 'do it'.... they could see what we could do". Incredibly enough, 4 days after the group members had been selected, the deals were concluded - and, on the face of it, the management merely provided unlimited finance and arranged for an album to be recorded and a US tour to be undertaken.

"The whole thing" says Michael, "felt like it was pre-ordained really; there was no hassling, no nail-biting, no anguish.... everything just fell into place; we were young, energetic and ready to rock. It was magic, rather than fluke".

The initial image was "an extension of ourselves.... there was no discussion about which direction we were going to pursue, and though I'm very much into lyrics, I'd say we fell into playing body music, or 'genitals music' as I told one lady interviewer".

Released in America, on Signpost, last Autumn, with this lurid sleeve that would have done old Gary Glitter proud (they'd all been given clothing allowances and had forked out for £30 jackets and the like), their first album was recorded almost immediately:

"It was extremely loose; as I said, we were allowed to do exactly what we wanted, which was exceedingly generous.... but we'd only been together a month, and we recorded and mixed it in only 6 days - after which, we boogied off to the States. But we learnt a hell of a lot about studio work in those 6 days, and I learnt to appreciate the objective ear of an independent producer".

The album sold very well in the US, despite a certain amount of criticism in the press. How about this review, for instance:

*Silverhead by Silverhead (Signpost SP 8407).*

Spread rubber cement over the grooves and sprinkle with green and gold glitter; cover the label with white grease paint and shade with eye shadow and rouge. Underneath will quietly repose some tenth-rate British Alice Cooper music.

Richard Cromelin

I think this sums up my feelings about rock critics; what qualifications do guys like this have for getting up and making remarks like that? What if he were in a group who had put all their effort into an album, only to find some creep dismiss it with a stroke of his pen. One wonders what Richard Cromelin's musical ability stretches

\* From the McGuinn/Hillman song 'So you want to be a rock and roll star?'

to.... maybe he's the greatest guitarist since Hendrix, or maybe he's tone deaf. Either way, that criticism is just as much a reflection of his own work as that of Silverhead who could justly, and with equal validity, print something like: "Pour mayonnaise and phlegm over the flesh and sprinkle flakes of compressed buffalo dung and assorted vermin. Under this rotting maggot heap will quietly repose a tenth rate Lester Bangs".

Having said all that, I shall immediately jump into my own trap by saying that the album is not particularly wonderful (it has recently been released here on Purple Records), and the sleeve, which was specially changed for England, is even worse than the American one. In fact, I've seldom seen such a totally mediocre sleeve.... it harks back to those Des O'Connor classics that EMI's art department used to slap together in the sixties.

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Between the album being recorded and their leaping off to America, they managed to secure the services of BP Fallon - ostensibly to be their publicist but, as the weeks rolled by, to become their critical adviser and best friend as well. He'd left Marc Bolan and disappeared to the country for a while (with Robbie Blunt, the very same) to consider his next move, refusing one or two lucrative offers from the Sunday Garbage Rags to give them 'My Thrill' packed, drug crazed, sex orgies with the bopping elf' stories. He also turned down invitations to publicise and rejuvenate weary groups, or to get fresh garbage off the ground, as though he were some reincarnated Merlin, able to whisk groups up the ladder with a wave of his wand.

Nevertheless, after a lot of badgering, he finally agreed to at least go and see Silverhead, if only to prevent their managers from pestering him further - and, surprise surprise, he was knocked out by their potential and agreed to work with them. The partnership became one of mutual respect; he digs them and they dig him... as Michael says: "He's got rock'n'roll coming out of every pore.... his presence alone is enough to gee you up and get you out there working".

Within 2 days of meeting Beep, they were all on a plane to New York, where they toured around with Deep Purple and Fleetwood Mac for 3 weeks as well as doing a week at the Whiskey A Go Go in Los Angeles. "We did very well in the States; it was just incredible to play there"... especially as they had only done 6 gigs in England (one of which was the Rainbow with Deep Purple) before they went. "America is, after all, the home of rock and roll, and the vibrations are so strong - all the kids and groupies and everybody giving you inspiration. The audiences over there are so involved with the music; for that hour you're on stage, you could be God or you could be a garbage collector.... if they dig the music, they'll be moved and you'll feel like the Beatles or the Rolling Stones, but if they don't like you, they'll kick you off. It means so much more to the kids over there.... it's not just turning on Radio One.... it's like a religion".

Did the tour pay for itself; I mean, did Silverhead come out of it with a profit?

"Yes, I think so".

Well, how come all these other groups come back moaning about the

impossibility of breaking even on the first couple of tours?

"I don't know.... It must be poor management or something like that".

From what he told me, gigs in the States bear little relationship to those in England. For instance: "We played Gaelic Park in New York, and it just about did our heads in. A big black Cadillac turned up at the hotel to pick us up, and we fell into the back of it, stoned out of our brains, and then onto the stage.... and you feel great. It's not like clambering into a Transit with 10 Embassy, Reveille and Tit-Bits, and maybe a quarter of an ounce of dope".

"All the fantasy is in America. I remember seeing the Beatles and the Stones arriving in New York on the television news - and that's what rock and roll should be.... the airline shoulder bag, loads of fun...."

"My fantasy, a rock and roll band, became a reality, and then the reality became almost total fantasy. But the whole idea is to have a good time; get the most out of it, but keeping your balance with all the excesses you inevitably get involved with. You see, you can go two ways: you can get into it, have a good time and grow as a musician and a person, or else you can go the other way, start shooting smack and die".

## Deep in the bowels of Chelsea

Mid January; for the first time, Silverhead is rehearsing with their new guitarist. Steve Forrest, finding it increasingly difficult to reconcile whizzing around the globe with his marriage, chose to leave the group and, basically at Robert Plant's suggestion, Robbie Blunt nipped down to fill the breach.

So now the line-up is:

Michael Des Barres - singer  
Rod Davies - guitar (he's been in a lot of groups, including a long spell with The Riot Squad, which also included David Bowie and Mitch Mitchell)

Pete Thomson - drums  
Nigel Harrison - bass, and  
Robbie Blunt - guitar.

There's always a great deal of pleasure involved in watching a group rehearse in the studio; all of those vu-meters whizzing back and forth, and a solid tonal perfection which is somehow never equalled on record or gig. Starting, stopping, suggesting, advising, smiling and starting again.... shaking the very foundation of this crumbling subterranean room under the squalid and unfashionable end of the Kings Road.

It's the first time they've played together, and there's a great sense of optimism and excitement in the air, with Robbie bringing authority and experience into the band. Rather like a third division football team signing up Malcolm MacDonald and feeling certain that they'll be in the first division within two seasons.

Within minutes of starting up, the "chemistry", as Beep would say, is working, and after romping through a few songs which Robbie knows from the album, they attack a new one called 'Heavy Hammer', working solidly and paying great attention to a twin lead guitar part before spending over an hour working out the ending.

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That was a month ago, since when they've toured Europe with Uriah the Dungheap, and by the time this magazine staggers to the shops, they'll be in the States again, touring on a Urea Heap/Spooky Tooth package, followed by another week at the Whiskey in L.A. Then they hope to start on their second album.... about 20 songs are ready, from which the best will be selected.

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The financial aspects intrigue me no end; I've spoken to countless new bands and yet Silverhead are almost unique as far as bread is concerned. With most new groups (and old groups for that matter) are grovelling for gigs, for equipment, for agency, for management, for transport, for press, for record contracts, for bread.... and here's a guy who's never ever sung in public before (in fact, who's only sung in front of his mirror), and he walks in off the street and is offered everything on a plate.

"They said 'Here's the bread - get it together'.... we all get paid wages".

Maybe it's an ideal situation, I don't know. As I understand it, Michael is on a long term contract and so bears personal responsibility, which could end up as a massive debt or could be a vast amount of bread, and the others are hired on a weekly basis with a wage that doesn't vary even if they have a million seller and sell out the Empire Pool for 6 nights in a row. As I say, it could be an ideal situation, but there again, after the novelty has worn off, it could be a question of stogging along as directed by the boss. I'm not being unkind or anything, but over the history of rock, the most original and creative music has been bred by incentive.

On the other hand, I've seen many bands working on a share the money basis getting deeper and deeper into debt with manager and record company. So, when one of the members wants to leave and join a new band, he can't record unless his debt is cleared. I suppose it's 6 of one and half a dozen of the other, but one thing is certain - the rock world is no place for shoe string budgeters or amateurs these days; it's all big business, my boy.

Silverhead's pa, a Kelsey-Morris, cost a few thousand quid for a start (it's a great pa, but it should be for the bread it cost), and the 16 channel mixer allows everything to be miked up and amplified through the pa, as well as the brand new Marshall stacks which, once again, their management furnished.

How does Michael feel about these poor old bands who've been struggling for years, trying to get a break?

"I don't think about them at all.... It's not my problem, it's theirs. If they had the right mental attitude and summoned their will, they could make it. When I got back from Europe in 1970 and was just bumming around, it was my magus year in the Tarot, and that meant I had to discover my true will then, ready to employ it through the ensuing years - and I was lucky enough to discover my true will, I had a flash.... and here I am doing it. As for the struggling bands, it's up to them.... I've had no experience of that, so I don't know - though I've had lots of experience of being down and out".

What does the future hold.... are there definite plans laid out for the assault on stardom?

"No, but every step will be positive. The new album will be a boogie album and will have a wider appeal, and when we come back from America, we're going to tour around England and try to get our name known a bit more".

Not only is he confident of success, he's certain that his managers will see a return from their investments a few weeks after the second album is released.

## Lunch at Fortnum & Mason's

Only three-quarters of a column left - and I could fill pages. Fortnum and Mason's, in case you didn't know, is essentially a nobby food store in Piccadilly; it's where the gentry go to order their Christmas puddings. It also has a restaurant where people straight out of the pages of 'Vogue' go to eat.

It was in this unlikely, Fellini-like setting, that the scruffy quartet of Beep, Michael, Robbie Blunt and I had lunch and concluded the interview.... it was a piece of amusement that Beep had lined up for us. (The fact that he subsequently found he'd left his wallet and all his bread at home gave me heart failure and visions of spending the rest of the week up to my elbows in Fairy Liquid, but, almost unbelievably, the head waiter decided to trust him to send a cheque).

If this kind of expense account living is typical of how struggling new groups live, I'm going to buy a guitar; there was Michael examining the menu and saying things like "I'm fed up with steaks", Beep telling the waitress he was "a Blue Nun freak", and Robbie eating a salad decorated with prunes, chopped nuts and quartered peaches.

Robbie, I discovered, had an interesting music history; apart from Bronco, he'd played in a folk duo with Roger Sharp (called Sharp and Blunt) and had earned £4 a night at the Bridge Inn in Kidderminster as lead guitarist for Butch Clutch and the Accelerators. He's certainly a guitarist and a half, but I fail to see how he's going to fit into Silverhead.... which brings me to my moans: quite honestly, I'm very dubious about Silverhead, and I'd be a liar if I said I thought their music was either particularly original or particularly brilliant. The financial set-up also fills me with scepticism, and I find Michael's explanation of why he, and none of the others, has his picture on the adverts and album sleeve, a bitter pill to swallow. He justifies it by saying that "it's easier to project a solitary image". Personally, if I were in Silverhead, I'd feel that it was a superstar and his backing band trip.... I mean, can you imagine Mick Jagger doing that? Even Alice Cooper always has the other geezers on the front.

To be fair, I think I was blagged into doing an article on Silverhead too early.... time alone will tell just how much they have to offer - and it could be a considerable amount.

I promised to go and see them on the last gig before flying off to the States, but it happened to coincide with the North Marston Valentine's Day Ball and you can't turn your back on occasions as illustrious as that, can you?

All I'm waiting for now is their return from America, when they'll no doubt be up here to beat my head in for not enveloping them with unreserved praise.

Pete



'The Crock of Gold' by James Stephens  
Pan 30p

If Zigzag were to enter the vulgar realms of commerciality by naming a 'book of the month', then this would be it - which is incredible really, considering that it was written in 1912. It is a fairy story in the style later popularised by Tolkien but, in my opinion, is superior to anything that Tolkien has written, partly because it is highly satirical and also because it is written by a poet.

The opening sets the scene: "In the centre of the pine wood called Coilla Doraca there lived not long ago two philosophers. They were wiser than anything else in the world except the Salmon who lies in the pool of the Glyn Cagny, into which the nuts of knowledge fall from the hazel bush on its bank". The two philosophers were condemned to marry the meanest and most terrible women on earth, who decided to marry them to take their revenge upon them. They have a child each and 'The Crock of Gold' tells, in fairy tale terms, the story of their lives. There is a delightfully wry sense of humour throughout the book, especially when the philosophers speak, because they are apt to converse as if they were giving a lecture. This is a typical example, after the question of washing arises: "The first person who washed was probably a person seeking a cheap notoriety. Any fool can wash himself, but every wise man knows that it is an unnecessary labour, for nature will quickly reduce him to a natural and healthy dirtiness again. We should seek, therefore, not how to make ourselves clean, but how to attain a more unique and splendid dirtiness, and perhaps the accumulated layers of matter might, by ordinary geologic compulsion, become incorp-



## PAPERBACK PERUSAL

orated with the human cuticle and so render clothing unnecessary".

It is a beautiful book and Pan are to be congratulated for their imagination in republishing it all these years afterwards. Yes, it leaves Tolkien far behind, and after you have read it I think you'll agree with me.



'The Complete Book of Home Winemaking' by H. E. Bravery Pan 40p  
'The Beginner's Cookery Book' by Betty Falk Penguin 40p

I have this friend who has virtually become a recluse in the wastes of Morden, Surrey, because of his over-riding pre-occupation with the making of home-made wine (not to mention yoghourt). His house is now almost filled with bottles of the stuff, ranging from dry whites to sherry and Vermouth. He thinks he is wasting money if a bottle costs 6p, and having been at a recent tasting, I can vouch that it is indeed very good stuff, highly slumberous too. What with the ludicrous inflation (which proves how useless

economists are) it is wise to do more for yourself. With this in mind, I'll be bringing regular news of books which help that cause.

Mr Bravery (an apt name) has been making his own wines for over thirty years. The great thing about this wine-making book is that it presumes you know nothing about the subject.

I'm an avid reader of cookery books, but far too many of them presume you know the basics, which are the very thing a person like me, not having taken domestic science at school (and I wish we had been allowed to) is the part of cooking which defeats me. So, although Penguins have produced the admirably written Elizabeth David cookbooks, I welcome 'The Beginner's Cookery Book', and might recommend while at it Bee Nilsson's 'Penguin Cookery Book'. A standard publication this, and a must for everyone's bed-sit, kitchen or student digs. Again, don't forget that linned and readymade takeaway food is always more expensive and less satisfying than your own efforts.

Betty Falk's book also helpfully tells you how long each recipe takes to prepare, and there are plenty of quick, as well as more painstaking, dishes. Having had recently to live once again in bed-sit facilities with a small Belling electric oven, I can recommend two basics: home made soup, which this book simplifies perfectly, and varying approaches to the old fashioned stew, which always tastes best at the second cooking, according to the best chefs. The best stew is a French 'daube', as described in Elizabeth David's 'French Provincial Cookery' (Penguin), and remember that a small amount of Guinness or some cider always adds a better flavour to the gravy. Michael Wale

# chapter three DRUGS (EEK!) & THE FIFTH DIMENSION... NOT TO MENTION PROBLEMS WITHIN April 1966 - December 1966

"The Byrds are waiting!" wrote Derek Taylor from his Sunset Boulevard office. "...with the cool, remote aplomb for which they are either admired or deplored... for their third number one single in the United States. 'Eight Miles High', the fifth US single release is at number 24 on the Cash Box chart, and no Byrd record has been played so hard coast to coast. "The vital element in quick US chart busts is simultaneous nationwide airplay... ideally, New York should be playing a record at the same time as Chicago and Los Angeles. All three cities picked up on 'Eight Miles High' on the day of release; so, the Byrds are blandly optimistic. If they make it, their form will run 'Mr Tambourine Man' number 1, 'All I really want to do' number 9, 'Turn Turn Turn' number 1, 'It won't be wrong' number 39, 'Eight Miles High' number 1. 'Eight Miles High' is the decider - this is the one which puts them way, way ahead of the field which is now seething with some tough new sprinters; Mamas & Papas, Spoonful, Revere and the Raiders, Turtles, and the distance runners like the Beach Boys. So here they are in their homes in the Hollywood Hills, smoking cigarettes under the California sun, patiently waiting for the charts to rain new glories."

It was a nice dream, but a short-lived one... within a couple of weeks the record had been widely banned on radio stations across America. What with this, and Bob Dylan advising that "everybody must get stoned", the establishment became gripped in drug paranoia.

"Eight Miles High" is nothing to do with drugs... and it was just one guy who got it banned from the radio. This guy used to make a programming list to send to all the stations - you know, 'selected singles'... one of those rackets, and he banned 'Eight Miles High'. He caused such a fuss about it that the stations stopped playing it, and it got nowhere near as high as it could've.

ZZ: Did this bloke have a lot of power over the stations then?  
CH: Yeah, I guess he did.... he carried a lot of weight - like Bill Drake, he can make or break a single.

ZZ: I can appreciate that it's a song about

an aeroplane trip to England, but there are various elements and clues to suggest that the Byrds were well into drugs around that time.

CH: Not really.... not more than an occasional smoke of hash. Acid was just coming into vogue then, but we weren't strong on it - like some of the San Francisco bands were, for instance.

ZZ: In England, most of the avant-garde pop and folk musicians were smoking hash around that time. I'd have thought that out on the West Coast, everyone would have been smoking grass in great abundance.

CH: No.... very few; in 64 and 65, very few. For years, the only people who ever smoked it were jazz musicians and some of the movie people.

ZZ: Yeah, but it was surely changing by then.... like in that Dylan book, it says he was almost permanently stoned in 1965; by the time that 'Eight Miles High' was released, surely the underground rock people had sussed it out?

CH: Yeah, maybe.... by that time, yes.  
ZZ: Then later, around the time of '13', McGuinn and Crosby, according to the Rolling Stone Lennon interview, turned the Beatles on to acid.... so it was around

pop music)?  
Anyway, as if one scare wasn't enough, the next single, '13', had even heavier 'drug philosophy connotations'.... it's about an LSD trip, without a doubt! the mad, rampaging record banners screamed. Byrdmaniacs around the globe smirked and bought it.... but wait; someone is rocking the boat.... there's trouble in the camp - '13' features a four-piece Byrds; Gene Clark is no longer with them! Panic stations at Columbia Records, who send a very urgent communique to London beseeching all press releases to emphasise the amicability of the split, lest the group should lose grace (and the company lose bread). Columbia didn't release news of Clark's departure until '13' was released in July (see their memo), but in fact, he had left the Byrds at the end of March, around the time that 'Eight Miles High' was released. Derek Taylor again: "They have recently survived a dramatic upheaval - the separation of Gene Clark, tambourine man, most prolific songwriter in the group, physically the strongest (the only one with obvious muscles), vocally the deepest, emotionally the warmest, and a founder member. "He left not because of a row, and not because he was fired. He left because he was tired of the multitude of obligations facing successful rock'n'roll groups. Tired of the travel, the hotels and the food. Tired of the pursuit of the most relentless autograph hunters, weary of the constant screaming. Battered by the photographs and interviews, and exhausted by the whole punishing scene."

"Gene was a good friend and a valuable Byrd - and while fans were mourning his absence, the Byrds too were feeling an emptiness which they sublimated by tackling the problems of consolidating their unit into four.... four, whom they knew would be expected to equate the impact of five."

"And, such is the fickleness of fans and of all people, and such is the healing power of time, the four some made it without Gene!"

So there you have Columbia almost shitting themselves with fear in July, when, according to Taylor, the whole problem had resolved itself within little more than a fortnight! And how was this miraculous recovery effected? Back to Derek Taylor for the explanation: "Bass-player Chris Hillman stepped forward from the shadows to take over David Crosby's mike, and to sing the vocal bottom. Crosby stepped to centre mike, where Gene had stood in the old days. McGuinn, King-Byrd, stayed where he was and adjusted his glasses, and trusted everything would work out all right.... and, started to talk to audiences. Yes - to talk. With wit and a firmness few had detected who did not know him well."



"And at the back of the stage, visible at last, drummer Michael Clarke assumed tambourine responsibilities. Thus did the Byrds become four", and thus, since time began, have the ranks closed totally to conceal the absence of those who have gone.

"Gene will always be a Byrd. For he wrote Byrd songs and, indeed, 'Eight Miles High' was his hymn to London - to the very strange and mystical impact the city had on the Byrds when they arrived last year to justify the intriguing reputation they had earned so swiftly with 'Mr Tambourine Man'."

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So, Gene Clark was tired of being a big star? McGuinn gives a slightly more concise explanation: "He got uptight on airplanes. He reached the point of crisis - the mounting pressure of the whole gig - and at that point, it was pretty intense. We had pressure from the press and we had to be good, but we were shuffled about like cattle and you get that boxed-in feeling. That's what ganged up on Gene - he's a country boy from Missouri - a farm boy who got into this high intensity city thing, and the airplanes got to him."

Apparently, the climax of his fears came when they had to fly back after their August tour of Britain. They had to fly to Hollywood via New York, where they had a TV show to do, and Clark suddenly cracked: "He was afraid the plane would crash - I mean, he was really deathly afraid. ... He came out in a cold sweat. The thing was that Gene had been claustrophobic before, so none of us were really sure that he was going to be wrong this time. Luckily, he was. It was disconcerting doing gigs just after he left, because all the people would yell 'where's Gene?' But, in a way, being four really got us together; it became a much tighter organization. I remember a communication between Crosby and George Harrison at the time, and Harrison said 'isn't it lighter and nicer with just four?' And it was."

The Byrds, little more than local hermits a year before, had now become fashion pointers for a generation - a fact which Derek Taylor was only too glad to impart: "On a non-musical level, the Byrds have emerged as teen trend leaders, and are sought to illuminate the pages of fashion magazines. McGuinn's tinted narrow sun glasses turn up on noses snub and noses short, hooters hooked and long. ... all over the Union, you'll find Byrd-glasses; and Crosby's cloak is the delight of both sexes, and Newsweek has noted its influence."

"It's clear that the Byrds are no longer the private property of the little hippies on the Strip, for now they belong to too many others. The hippies long for the old days, when the Byrds walked up the Strip to play

handed drumming was Michael Clarke.... wonder if it was?"

Jazz/Raga rock: '18 Miles High'. Just fabulous. Again, Crosby's chunky rhythm guitar.... what a pity that he's become an ex-musician. Can you imagine him standing up there on stage with the Byrds today?

McGuinn was recently on the 'Today' TV show explaining to the interviewer how the Byrds were always ahead of the field because they managed to anticipate trends and keep one jump in front.... in early 1966, they were at least 5 jumps in front. Dino Valente rock (?): 'Hey Joe!'. This was a minor hit for Los Angeles group Love in early 1966; they were largely inspired by the Byrds, but the Byrds in turn copied Love's arrangement, which, incidentally, featured Bryan Maclean, one of the Byrds' first roadies, on vocals. Another LA group, the Leaves, also had a small hit with the song in 1966, and then Jimi Hendrix had a monster smash with it in 1967, following Tim Rose's arrangement. (Tim Rose's own version was released in May 66).

An instrumental: 'Captain Soul'. A very strange choice. I'd like to think of this as the musical projection of some idea - like McGuinn courting through the cosmos in some elegant craft.... or even just driving across LA in a fat car; but it was probably nothing more than an impromptu blues structured jam, which they decided to embellish and use as a filler. (Who is playing that harmonica, I wonder?) I remember that Radio London, the most magnificent of the pirate fleet, used to play a phased version of this.... totally amazing to me in 1966.

Vacuum cleaner rock (!?): 'Lear Jet Song'. They always close their albums with a weird one, and this (according to our readers poll) is certainly one of the Byrds' least loved tracks. Sometimes I find it irritating, but there again I often think that they should have developed the idea, so that this became the start of a 30 minute/whole side track, which could have turned out like a Steve Miller style epic. I wonder where the location track of the pilot going through his pre-flight check list was recorded, and in what circumstances?

"In early April, they were faced with a one-night stand in Pensacola, on the Florida coast of the Gulf of Mexico (a 4000 miles round trip from LA), and rejected the six routine flights available. Instead, they chose their own chartered six seat Lear Jet. Cost of the trip: 3900 dollars. For one thirty minute performance! Byrd leader McGuinn was asked about the extravagance. 'We did it because it was groovy, man; 530 miles per hour, and it climbs 42,000 feet (approximately eight miles high) in fifteen minutes!'. 1

Two others (for which I can't think of appropriate categories): 'What's happen-

## CBS INTERNATIONAL MEMO

DATE: July 11, 1966

FROM: Frank Calamita

TO: ALL CBS RECORDS AFFILIATES

COPIES: N.Y. International Staff, Messrs. de Rougemont and Villarreal

RE: THE BYRDS

The Byrds are now a four-man group. Gene Clark has left the group. The remaining four members are:

Jim McGuinn  
David Crosby  
Chris Hillman  
Mike Clark

The first recording by the four-man group is "5D - (Fifth Dimension)" / "Captain Soul" (4-43702) which is currently climbing the US charts.

The Byrds are to be publicized and promoted as a four-man group. The Byrds' photo contact sheet (#101) is being revised to include four-man shots. However, in the meantime, anyone ordering photos of the group will automatically receive four-man shots.

Publicity Departments Note: In order to preserve the continuity of the Byrds popularity, this should not be treated as a special announcement. Instead, you should just begin to use four-man photographs in your publicity and advertisements. Inquiries as to why Gene Clark left the group should run something like this: "Gene Clark for his own personal reasons felt he no longer wanted to perform with the group. He still retains a close friendship with the remaining members."

FC/rw

COLUMBIA

for thirty dollars per man at Ciro's; the days when they had no homes to call their own, the days when the Byrds were the new thing, and about to make it. But, like the Beatles and the Stones, the Byrds found success brings an inevitable uprooting from old ways and former places; and when the Byrds left the Trip after their nightly stint last week, it was in Porsches equipped with stereo tape players, and it was to the fashionable hills they drove - away from the noise and lights of Sunset Boulevard, past the fifteen cent coffee stands of yesterday."

"But they still retain the friendship of their earliest devotees, for, despite their air of detachment and despite the aura of withdrawal which surrounds them, they are a warm and dependable group; and the people with whom they shared hamburgers and coke a few years ago are still their friends in the palmy salami days of wine and sweet success!"

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"Fifth Dimension", the third Byrds album (discounting IPreflytel), came out on the 18th July 1966 (22nd September in Britain ... CBS 62783). The sleeve shows the trimmed 4 piece Byrds: McGuinn in his no moustache/no beard/shorter hair/larger sunglasses guise; Crosby in his green suede trademark cape; Clarke in a tie; and Hillman, with vigorously straightened hair, looking a bit like Brian Jones. They're trying to look relaxed on a magic carpet which the Spanish Trading Centre loaned them on the condition that they get a credit on the back. And, talking of the back, it's the most unrewarding back cover yet - except, maybe, for that stark shot of McGuinn at his Rickenbacker.

Compared with its predecessors, a very much more impressive, varied album, which (for the sake of clarity) is readily broken down into categories:

Real genuine traditional (British even) folk rock: 'Wild Mountain Thyme', a good

THE BYRDS

October 7, 1966

## THE BYRD'S MILLION DOLLAR INSURANCE POLICY

Tickner-Dickson, the management representatives of the Byrds, recently revealed that they have taken extreme precautionary measures in the interest of their clients. Eddie Tickner reports that he has taken out a US \$1,000,000 Insurance policy with Lloyds of London against the loss of The Byrds to outer space.

In their current CBS Records hit, "Mr. Spaceman," The Byrds ask strange, other-world people to take them along for a ride. Mr. Tickner says: "We live in weird times, and it would be foolish not to take seriously the possibility that there may be a response from outer space." The Byrds are therefore covered against their non-return to this planet in case their request for a tour in outer space is granted.

The plea is voiced in the lyrics of "Mr. Spaceman": "Hey, Mr. Spaceman, won't you please take me along, and I won't do anything wrong, won't you please take me along for a ride." So goes the invitation to the masters of the legendary flying objects to lift The Byrds from earth.

We trust it will work out all right. But remember

Jules Verne.

News of CBS Records artists distributed to CBS Records affiliates around the world.

ing! Crosby "really got his head together, man" in 1966... his writing, singing and playing are all excellent. (And, it must be mentioned, Hillman's bass style has developed beautifully).

"I see you! - McGuinn determined to play space ranging sounds, even over a love song.

Altogether, a great album - and not even a vague trace of Bob Dylan (except, maybe, that he used to sing 'Wild Mountain Thyme' in his bath). A much cleaner production (and mix) by Allen Stanton, who left Columbia immediately afterwards to join A&M Records where, amongst others, he produced the first Brewer & Shipley album. (I wonder what became of Melcher in that Winter of 65/66?)

McGuinn, as usual, is over critical in retrospect: "I think it was a disappointment to the public. They weren't ready for our material and, to be honest, I don't think it was up to the level we'd set for ourselves. It was a step down in quality

old singalong favourite, begging for the ringing harmonies of a folk club audience, and John Riley', with its nicely romantic trad-folk plot. These tracks also employ strings for the first time (they'd used only a minimum of additional instrumentation before - a piano on one track on the first album, and an organ on one track on the second), though both the arrangements and the mixes are pretty rudimentary. Don't forget, however, that this is early 1966; the days when engineers were competent but straight cats who had probably just come off an Andy Williams session.... so you've got the group on one side, the strings on the other, and the voices up the middle. But they're lovely songs.

Contemporary/protest folk rock: 'I come and stand at every door', a macabre song about Hiroshima, copped off a Pete Seeger album. These were the days.... when the folkies were sages, offering wisdom and advice to a troubled world. Songs like this used to stir my heart in 65/66, but I can't say that it's one of my favourites now. One has to remember, however, that its inclusion was at least consonant with the general feelings of American youth, which was then being drafted to Vietnam by the boatload.

Science fiction/Space rock: 'Mr Spaceman' (see later), with Crosby's energetic rhythm guitar crunch and snatchy in the left speaker.... fabulous Byrd music, and a great McGuinn guitar solo too.

Acid/exploratory rock (?): '5D' (see later), an incredible track.... one of the Byrds' best. Recently, I was told that the Byrds were in the studio looking for a hit single. Times change. Back in '66, whilst the managers, publicity people, and record company executives talked in almost paranoid terms of top ten hits and maintaining a jelly-baby throwing audience popularity, the Byrds seemed to be interested in singles only if they represented a step forward. Commercial considerations and sales potential seem to be disregarded in favour of personal integrity and the need to do something new and untried, something adventurous. McGuinn can never be dismissed as a pop-song writer; he's a film director/novelist who uses the record as his medium instead, the explorer/scientist who records his observations and conclusions in songs rather than notebooks. As well as the lyric, especially notable are the superb harmonies, the 'aaaaah!' (one of rock history's finest exclamations!), and the pop music's most distinctive guitarists, and the twin force of that solo as it draws out into space at the end of the track is just so charged with atmosphere. That's Van Dyke Parks, mixed into the shadows, making a pre-frame guest appearance, and I always liked to think that the heavy

foolish waste of money. Nobody believed it at the time - they wouldn't have done if a policy had really been taken out either.

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As far as the drug issue is concerned, we're immediately confronted with a big dilemma: the only people who refuse to acknowledge drug connotations in songs like 'Mr Tambourine Man', 'Eight Miles High' and '5D', are the Byrds themselves, who, rather than emphatically deny drug implications, are always prepared to go to extraordinary lengths to explain the alternative (i.e. true and intended) interpretation. Though he's a well-known piss taker when he feels like it, I find it very difficult to doubt McGuinn's sincerity and honesty on the subject - though I'm pretty sure that during the era of the songs in question, drugs were probably, for a while, one of the most important things in their lives.

ZZ:9 What have you got to say about drug references in your songs?

Gene Parsons (seriously, but with a glint in his eye): Why does everybody always go on about drugs? The Byrds have never actually advocated their use.

ZZ: Are none of your songs connected with drugs then?

Gene: We never recommended them to anybody.

ZZ: I'd better go home and have another listen.

Gene: Yeah - you do that.

ZZ: I will.

Gene (eyes twinkling): Hey.... get stoned first!

\*\* \*\* \*\* \*\*

Well, cocksure critics and commentators, over the last six years or so, have got hold of the songs in question and drawn emphatic conclusions: '5D' is an account of an acid trip.... they find that the experience shakes the view of the world they had known before! But all this cat's cocky authority is dashed to shreds by McGuinn's refusal to give the 'drug theories' credence. And here are some more: "Mr Tambourine Man" was generally interpreted as an address to the pushen'g Miles High! Intrigued those who were similarly interested in conjuring the impression of being on a drug trip! 118 Miles High! describes a jet trip to England, but it does so in terms of a key acid motif... the ascending airplane!"

In a discussion about Vice President Spiro Agnew demanding radio bans on records like 'Eight Miles High', 'White Rabbit', 'One toke over the line' early last year, McGuinn explained his interpretations: (Note: 'Take a whiff on me', which is chronologically out of order, is lumped



into this chapter so that all the "drugsongs" can be discussed together).

ZZ: 81 notice that when you do it live, you sing one line of 'Take a whiff' as 'C'mon Spiro take a whiff on me'.

Roger McGuinn: That's something that Clarence slipped in - it started out as a spontaneous thing one night and we just kept it in... which is the way that all the changes in the act take place - they get done once and if they work we keep them.

ZZ: What exactly did Spiro do - put out a list of songs that radio stations should refuse to play?

RM: Well, the FCC did. I don't think it could have been the head of the FCC, because he's quite a liberal character himself... he goes around talking about the incongruities of the FCC censoring system. But Spiro, as you know, has a big mouth and goes around shooting it off quite a lot - very often on subjects on which he's not too well informed - and he often retracts things he's said... probably on the advice of some higher power. I heard that he retracted the statement about 'Eight Miles High', but I haven't seen it in print, so I'm not really sure... and if I had, I still wouldn't be sure... if I saw him retract it on television I'd be more sure - if I could hear the words and see his face moving. In a way it's a good thing, but in another way it's a bad thing, because 'Eight Miles High' isn't... well, you know about that don't you?

ZZ: I'd be interested to hear the official, or rather actual, meaning.

RM: Well, I'll give it to you line by line: 'Eight miles high...'. We started it out as six miles high - Gene Clark and I wrote the lyrics - because that's the approximate altitude that commercial airliners fly. 42 or 43,000 feet - or about eight miles high - is the altitude reserved for military aircraft only; commercial aircraft have to fly below that - and that was one discrepancy which led people to believe it was about drugs and not airplanes. But Gene said that 8 miles sounds better than 6, and it did sound more poetic - and it was also around the time of 18 days a week by the Beatles, so that was another hook or catch, if you like. Of course, we weren't totally unaware of the innuendo, but we didn't mean it as our primary intention.

ZZ: I think what you just said is one key to the whole thing - that you "weren't unaware of the innuendo".

RM: "... and when you touch down" was when you land here in London, which we did in August 1965, shortly before we wrote it. "... you'll find it's stranger than known", which is a poetical way of saying that you're in cultural shock, which we were... you'd probably be in cultural

spiritualism of one sort or another... but it's only a vehicle; it's not the end result, and I was talking about the end result... without drugs. I mean, after you've gone through drugs. They confused that, not having taken the same path".

So here he admits that drugs were an initial stepping stone to spiritual discovery... or could be a stepping stone. Subud and the paths that opened up were further stages, and the final catalyst, according to another interview, was a booklet: 'I'll be talking about something philosophical and very light and airy with that song, and everyone took it down... they took it down to drugs; they said it was a dope song and that I was on LSD, and it wasn't any of that, in fact. I was dealing with Einstein's theory of relativity - the fourth dimension being time and the fifth dimension not being specified... so it's open; channel 5 - the next step. I saw it to be a timelessness - a sort of void in space, where time has no meaning.

"All I did was perceive something that was there. The catalyst to the whole idea was a booklet someone sent to me called 'One Two Three Four - More More More More...'. which was about dimensions but explained in a cartoon way. It gave me the premise for the song, but I think that the booklet should've been issued with the song so people would have been able to understand. I gave the copy I had to Al Stanton (the producer), who read it and gave it to his kid because he thought it was a comic".

He delves deeper into the meaning of the song: "It was an ethereal trip into metaphysics, into an almost Moslem submission to an Allah, an almighty spirit, free-floating, the fifth dimension being the 'mesh' which Einstein theorised about. He proved theoretically - and I choose to believe it - that there's an ethereal mesh in the universe, and probably the reason for the speed of light being what it is is because of the friction going through that mesh. The song was talking about a way of life, a submission to God or whatever you want to call that mesh, that life-force".

And McGuinn seriously expected Byrd fans to realise all this?

I hope that someday someone with a tape recorder will corner McGuinn when he's got an hour or so to spare, and go through the whole of '5D' from conception to final mix, getting a detailed and accurate account of each line, and the whys and the wherefores behind it.

But meanwhile, let the man continue: "Perhaps I got too intellectual with '5D'; afterwards I got a little discouraged - at least from putting out spiritual data to the record buying public and AM radio. Mind you, I was spiritually involved in both 'Mr Tambourine Man' and 'Turn Turn Turn',

shock if you landed in New York - in fact, you'd probably vomit.

"Signs in the street that say where you're going, are somewhere just being their own"; if you're used to road signs that are green and white and about eight feet wide, with letters two feet high, and they glow in the headlights about 200 or so yards before the intersection, then you come over here and try to find the names of the streets... you know, you find them tacked high up on the sides of buildings - if they haven't been torn off or fallen off. So that line refers to how difficult it is to find which street you're on... it's one of the things which strikes a visiting American; the signs are so obscure compared with the ones in California, where you can get lost, but you still know which street you're on.

"Rain, grey town... round the squares huddled in storms, some laughing, some just shapeless forms..." They were just images of London - what we saw when we were here.

"Nowhere is there warmth to be found among those afraid of losing their ground". When we were here, the British pop scene was really on top of it and, I think, was a little wary of being cut into by the Americans, who had dominated the British pop scene for years until the Beatles. They just didn't want to see it again - and they didn't... they made sure of that... they made damned sure (no doubt silently musing about that disastrous tour and the way the press cut them up).

I think the British deserved their share of success, though they started scraping the bottom of the barrel after a while... and then the American scene came back with a whole new generation of bands - it goes in leaps, you know.

ZZ: How can you defend 'Take a whiff on me', or don't you try?

RM: That's an old traditional song about cocaine.

ZZ: Was Leadbelly snorting then?

RM: He probably was - I really didn't ever know the man and I don't know that much about him, frankly, but I just know that he did the song and liked it. But I think that most of the negro musicians of that era used cocaine at some time or another... a lot of people have used it and stopped it because it's detrimental to the health, but so's alcohol - and at least cocaine keeps you awake whereas alcohol puts you to sleep.

ZZ: What about '5D'?

RM: I wrote that as a spiritual song.

ZZ: This was when you were practising Subud? Can you tell us something about Subud? (Also see later).

RM: Well, I've been away from Subud long enough now to be considered no longer actively involved in it... that came about as a result of my being on the road so much and not having the time to attend. When I did go back to the meeting place in LA, it had all changed around, had moved its location, and had really started going downhill, so I just sort of... you know... I can do it on my own.

ZZ: I read a thing about it once, and it seemed to be little more than a sort of in-club for groovers - was it like that?

RM: Well, it was for a time around 1965 and 1966 - it got pretty popular... maybe because I was in it.

ZZ: I didn't realise that you were in it so long ago - were you actually involved before 'Mr Tambourine Man'?

RM: Yes. I was initiated into it on January 10th 1965. Our first manager's ex-wife originally got me interested in it, though I'd previously been exposed to it in New York through some friends.

ZZ: What is the religion based on?

RM: It's a westernisation of Islam really. ZZ: I read that participants sit in a circle and...

RM: No, it's not that organised... it could be a circular configuration, but they all sit down to start with and then someone says 'begin', and they all start with the exercising in you - you just move around, or sing, or do a whirling dervish thing... whatever feels spontaneous... it's a way of getting rid of pressures that you've collected from the world. It puts down all kinds of things; you're not supposed to drink or smoke... but of course, the leader of it carries a gun, has a Mercedes, drinks Coca Cola, and smokes these horrible Indonesian cigarettes - so it's sort of incongruous really - and his world travel transportation is paid for by the organisation.

ZZ: He seems to be as big a con-artist as the Pope.

RM: Well, he's a sort of Islam pope - he used to be a businessman until this thing hit him... no, I can't say that it isn't real; it's real enough, and it deals with God... the same old word in a different context. But it's real.

ZZ: Why didn't you send away for your Subud name until 1968? (He changed his Christian name from Jim to Roger - see later).

RM: The option was there all the time but I just didn't exercise it - but then I thought I'd take a chance and see. It was a horrible chance because you have to use the name once you ask for it - if you don't, you're in trouble... it's a spooky thing.

ZZ: How does this religion work on you?

RM: Well, you do what they call an exercise. The third or fourth one I did was as if I'd been electrocuted... as if they'd put electrodes in my head and turned on 5000 volts or something. POW. I'm serious, man - I saw blue lights and it just went through me and lasted for about 15 or so minutes. It was... what can I call it?... an electro-spiritual-tactile-visual hallucination.

ZZ: And this was experienced without any chemical assistance?

RM: Without any drugs or anything... in fact, they discourage drugs.

ZZ: How was this experience provoked then?

RM: It's just there if you believe it - it's here in this room even... if all of us in this room were to believe it and do it, we could feel it - though it may not be so heavy. It has never been so heavy for me since, because that first experience got rid of a lot of the things I'd been through - all the forces which were not necessarily good and which I'd been subjected to for the past 22 years, which is how old I was then.

ZZ: So '5D' was written about your observations as a result of that particular experience, rather than as a result of the judicious use of hallucinogenic drugs?

RM: Yes; and I expected everybody to understand that.

ZZ: You really did?

RM: Yes. It was a little crazy of me to expect that, I suppose... as I found out later - when they didn't.

ZZ: I've seen you quoted as being really pissed off that your audience didn't latch onto the fact that it wasn't acid inspired, but you can surely understand it... I mean, until I read your explanation, I'd always assumed that it was about discovery and conclusions through drug exploration.

RM: Oh yes... in fact, before the record was even released, I felt it might be interpreted like that, but I didn't really care - I just wanted to say my piece.

As mentioned, McGuinn has often volunteered information concerning the background to '5D'. Here is an extract from one interview in which he is more explicit on the song's link with drugs. McGuinn: '5D' was my attempt to get spiritual, but it seems that very few people actually understood what I was saying, and a great number of them mistook it for a straight play on drug stuff, which it wasn't. I mean, granted there is a link between spiritualism and drugs. The drugs are a vehicle to



The first publicity photo after Clark had flown: McGuinn/Hillman/Crosby/Clarke.

We all know what Dylan was singing about - and it wasn't Allah. However, let us proceed: 'At the beginning, it's me speaking to God, saying 'Hey Mr Tambourine Man, play a song for me... I'll follow you'... it's a spiritual testimonial. 'My hands can't feel to grip' - I got this overwhelming sensation and could not do anything except submit, and I sort of made a vow of allegiance... I'll follow you anywhere! I don't know what Dylan meant by it, but frankly speaking, if I hadn't meant what I meant with it, it wouldn't have been a hit!'

This all seems a bit strange when you consider that McGuinn recorded this a few months before he was initiated into Subud, and presumably before he had any real spiritual experiences. The whole thing reminds me of a folksinger friend of mine who went to play at a very straight/ethnic/traditional English folk club in Torquay back in 1965. One of his favourite songs was a Jack Elliott track called 'South Coast', which was a contemporary American song about some bloke who won his wife in a card game in Mexico or some such place. Now, to sing a song of such low breeding would be unforgivable and unacceptable to these staunch traddies, so, with a dead-pan sincere introduction, he told the audience that it was in fact an allegorical song written by an Englishman in the 17th century; the setting wasn't Mexico at all, but Dartmoor, and the wild animal referred to was an allusion to the ghost of a dragon which was rumoured to haunt the area, and so on. And he sang the song, and they all clapped... they found it difficult to believe he was telling the truth, but didn't have the authority to denounce him.

This little story may, or may not, be relevant; McGuinn's explanation does seem most unlikely, but what possible reason could he have for bullshitting? If he came out and said it was about dope, no-one in this enlightened year of 1972 would suddenly leap up and condemn the Byrds as evil influences on the impressionable youth.

So there you are. Pick out what you want to believe, interpret the interpretations with a pinch of salt if you wish, and draw your own conclusions. But bear in mind that acid had been around Greenwich Village since around 1961, that 'folkies', beats and emerging hippies of that era were very much into experimentation (reflected in many songs; e.g. first reference to 'psychedelic' is in 'Hesitation Blues' by the Holy Modal Rounders in February 64, then there's 'I couldn't get high' and 'New Amphetamine Shrike' - both recorded by the Fugs in late 64, then there are Dylan's allusions, etc), and that grass and hash were almost as important to avant garde pop musicians as they are now. (John Sebastian, for instance, says that hash was a big part of his life when he was Spoonfulling in LA in 1966).

Add to all that, a couple of interesting references: in the sleeve notes to 'Pre Flyte', Billy James mentions 'FBI men at a recording session, investigating some hash that was allegedly left on a plane by one of the Byrds'. A clever piece of writing, that... a hint of nefarious activity, but no admission that they were using hash, and no idea of the FBI men's conclusions after they'd finished investigating. Then in Disc, Derek Taylor talks about how the Byrds returned from their August 65



English tour to run into the douaniers at Chicago's O'Hare Airport, who "found some hash in the magazine rack". So even if they weren't 8 miles high on the flight to England, one is left to assume that they certainly were on the way back.

Yes... a rather large amount of herbs and chemicals must've been sampled in the last half of the sixties... but let Derek Taylor have the final word: "It is now 1971, but if you are looking for signposts in the sixties, then find the one marked 'Byrds'.... because it led to Woodstock, and a couple of weeks ago it led to Washington (to the Moratorium), when 7000 people, every single one of whom knows that 'Eight Miles High' is banned by their government, were arrested".

**SUMMARY:** No sooner was the 18 Miles High/Why? single released in April, than Gene Clark left, unable to withstand the pressures. Another single '50y/Captain Soul' (July) preceded the release of the 'Fifth Dimension' album.



(Released 18/7 in US, and 22/9 in UK). A further single, 'Mr Spaceman/What's happening!' came out in October.

THE BYRDS of this era are now:  
JIM MCGUINN - 12 string/vocals  
DAVE CROSBY - rhythm/vocals  
MIKE CLARKE - drums  
CHRIS HILLMAN - bass/vocals

On the right is an article on Subud and its relevance to rock, pinched from the April 1969 issue of Crawdad.



Jim McGuinn  
Dave Crosby  
Mike Clarke  
Chris Hillman  
Gene Clark

**CONTEMPORARY EVENTS:** April to Dec 1966  
April 4 'Aftermath' album by Rolling Stones, & 'Monday Monday' by the Mamas & Papas released.

April 14 Sandoz Pharmaceuticals Inc, the only authorised distributor of LSD in the US, recalls all supplies and decides to discontinue distribution as public controversy over alleged widespread use of the drug intensifies.

April 30 Richard Farina killed in motorcycle accident in Carmel, California.  
May 10 Dylan's 'Blonde on Blonde' released.  
May 13 Rolling Stones' 'Paint it black' released.  
May 14 Stokeley Carmichael elected chairman of the SNCC.

June 20 Tom Rush's first electric album, and the Seeds' (who bragged that they were the original 'flower-power' group) first album both released.

July 1 Pissed off Negroes begin riots in cities across America - principally Chicago, Omaha, Cleveland, Atlanta and Minneapolis.

July 16 Jack Bruce, Ginger Baker & Eric Clapton come together to form Cream.

August The Monkees arrive on television.  
Aug 5 'Revolver' by the Beatles, 'Freak Out' by the Mothers of Invention, and 'The Jefferson Airplane Takes Off' are all released.

Aug 9 American jets attack South Vietnamese village by mistake - many killed.  
Aug 10 UK wages freeze bill passed.

Sept 6 South African Prime Minister Verwoerd stabbed to death, only to be succeeded by an even bigger bastard.

Sept 20 Simon & Garfunkel's 'Parsley Sage' album released.

Oct 5 Murder conviction of Jack Ruby reversed by Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.

Oct 7 US 'aid' to foreign countries for the following year announced: 2,940 million dollars - while many US citizens live in miserable squalor and poverty.

Oct 14 US aircraft carry out a 175 mission attack on North Vietnam - the heaviest to date.

Oct 15 'All You Need Is Love' released.  
Oct 20 International Times (later IT) launched in London.

Oct 21 Aberfan slag tip disaster in Wales; 144 people killed.

Oct 23 LSD declared illegal in USA.  
Oct 29 Pope Paul 6 refuses to review Roman Catholics' birth control prohibition.

Nov 4 Floods cause immense damage to art treasures in Florence, Italy. (God's wrath on the Pope for being a fuckpig).

Nov 10 Wilson declares Britain's desire to get into the Common Market.

Nov 12 Longhairs stage demonstration against the curfew imposed on Sunset Strip.

Dec 16 China alleges that US planes have attacked its embassy in Hanoi.

Dec 24 'Winchester Cathedral' by New Vaudeville Band tops US singles chart, with Beach Boys' 'Good Vibrations' at No 2.

First, the simple mechanics of what Subud is:

An organization founded in Indonesia some thirty-odd years ago. A spiritual brotherhood whose name is a shortened form of *Susila Budhi Dharma*, meaning in essence, "patience, submission and sincerity." Subud spread through the world slowly at first and since the late fifties has been booming along nicely. It practices the theory that since God alone can know what spiritual path and exercise any individual man may require, man should get right to the nitty-gritty in his worship. The original contact has been passed on, perhaps, or light begets light, or something, but it works. Members meet twice a week, roughly, to do their *latihan* together, men in one room, women in another. The latihan is a thirty-minute period marked by anyone taking off their shoes and whatever else they deem fit, and someone saying "begin." For thirty minutes each member receives whatever he or she receives, and then someone says "finish." Then everybody puts on their shoes and goes upstairs for coffee or home or wherever else seems fit.

Now it is a curious thing that so many rock-and-rollers should willingly flock together in unspoken confusion once a week to the lot that they're the only ones there. But there are a lot of them. Why are they there? Well, you intuitively feel there to worship God. And what you intuitively feel some of them make. The bunch that others more dutifully end up doing a lot of recording, gigs and rehearsals and stuff together within the industry. Very few for bullbait musicians stay in Subud.

A long time ago, as time is measured in these parts, Brian Wilson was into Subud. He doesn't come anymore, but the Beach Boys still get weirder and weirder. The Papa John and Mama Michelle did it too, are now into inactive status.

Roger McGuinn, who used to be Jim, was opened in Subud several years ago. He underwent the unique experience of having several songs related directly to his religious experience banned as "drug songs."

Hamilton Camp. Scorpio bundle of nerves, has put the emblem is seven concentric circles divided seven times. The other week, in LA, a notice appeared on the Subud bulletin board. Richmond Shepard, mime and filmmaker, and Les Crane, TV interviewer, were making a movie. Would their brothers, especially brother musicians, come to the filming of a party on Saturday?

The next Saturday, by some incomprehensible magic of mutual disorganization, most everybody got together out in the San Fernando Valley. Hamilton Camp wasn't there. He was playing social director in another scene (besides he had to do the Snotties Brothers Show that week). Roger McGuinn, slightly bleary-eyed, was there. Cyrus Faryar, a radiant-smiled Places who has been on just about every session of every musician from Mama Cass to Fried Neil plus a record called *The Zodiac*. Cyrus was there, along with his wife Rusty/Renee (another musician) and a bunch of odd percussion.

Joey Richards, super-large, super-talented, and nineteen years old, was there looking like a 250-pound, round southern colonel. He had had a song done by the Monkees a year before, and was currently starving to death. (If someone fivefeet nine weighing 250 pounds can be said to do such a thing.) An anonymous horn player drifted in, and much later in the day a drummer turned up with full drum regalia and a beard. Henry (Tad) Diltz, rock&rollie and photographer to everyone, was there. Even Doug

ANDY ROBERTS album containing some of his best material (he's going solo again, I believe, after the sad collapse of Plainsong), GREENSLADE (who are also in the giant Crimson/Colosseum tree), STEVE MILLER's 'Anthology' - a double album of grade A (and some grade B) grist, 'Holland' - the finest BEACH BOYS album for years and years, the return of DOUG SAHM, the bargain priced re-issues of CLYDE McPHATTER (there's a name which carries a lot of weight), BUFFALO SPRINGFIELD (5 star jelly) and the COASTERS, then there's the new one from JUDY COLLINS (back to her best), the debut of CURT BOETCHER, the 3 CARATS albums (if you like oldies), 'Heartbreaker' by FREE (who, in my stupidity, I'd dismissed for some silly reason - they're great!), and 4 imports of interest: NORMAN GREENBAUM's 'Petals', JOHN HARTFORD's fine 'Morning Bugle' (I really like his stuff), JESSE WINCHESTER's second (which doesn't however, come up to the standard of his first amazing album), and the first album by PAN (among whom is ex-Beau Brummel Ron Elliott).

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"QUALITY PUBLICATIONS FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY"

Best band I saw during the last few weeks (apart from Genesis, whose Rainbow performance was one of the most incredible live shows I've seen - and other unreserved praises!) was the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band.... such phenomenal virtuosity and versatility. For instance, Jim Ibbotson has equal facility on guitar, bass, accordion, drums and vocals - and Jimmie Fadden, who's role I had misconceived as being minimal, turned out to be a great harp player and drummer, and a stunning lead guitarist! Don't miss them when they return to England, and try to get hold of their 'Uncle Charlie' album.

Right, that's another issue of Zigzag, the rock encyclopaedia in 68594 instalments, finished - now to answer some of that mail.

Oh yes, I mustn't forget to give the customary mention for Help Yourself - great band. There - I have to do that because their manager, John Eichler, buys me cups of coffee.

Until  
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fare thee well  
.....Pete



# ZIGZAG WANDERINGS

VOLUME III NUMBER 5

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HOME EDITION

A very quiet month, the highspot of which has been the allocation of postal codes to the area (see our brand new address!). The MK part stands for Milton Keynes - an indication that by 2001, if the mad, rampaging town planners have their way, North Marston will be swallowed by the sprawl of that projected city, designed to create a massive new centre of industry and population between London and Birmingham. Anyway, if you write, put the post code on - which will chuff up our postman (who's actually a lady) no end. She's our alarm clock; she heaves her sack of mail onto the doorstep and if she has records or parcels too big to force through the letter box (which she usually has), she rings the bell - whereupon I stagger to the bedroom window and lean out. "I've got two big ones today!" she shouts. "Um, very interesting - two big ones, eh?" I think to myself, by which time the icy winds blowing across the Oving hills have blasted the sleep from my eyes and I'm ready to face another day.

Speaking of mail, don't be discouraged if replies seem to take an inordinately long time. Our method of dealing with letters is as follows; during the time when we're under pressure to prepare an issue for the printers, all our efforts are concentrated on that, and all the mail is left until the last pages have gone off - whereupon we attack the envelopes with great gusto. There's a pile about eight miles high at the moment, so don't give up hope.... we'll get to yours.

Other apologies and inadequacies; we're holding over Elton John Part 3 (now ready), Hawkwind Part 2, Jimmy Page part 3, and Diary of Two Bands till next month (have you heard that before?). Also, the projected family tree of the Misunderstood wasn't as simple as it seemed. I got part of it done, but threw a wild fit of screaming impatience trying to plot the history of King Crimson (who manage to sneak into it somewhere along the line). This resulted in my tearing handfuls of hair from my balding pate and hollering high volume, blood-curdling curses out of the windows at astonished Bucks county council workmen who were resurfacing the road. Never mind - I'll get down to it with renewed patience.... but wait! A competition! Anyone who wants to experience the thrilling exasperation of family tree charting can help me here; if you have a few hours (days) to waste, have a bash at a King Crimson/Colosseum/Yes/etc tree, exploring every branch and including all dates and albums - then send your efforts to me, and it might help me complete an almost impossible task. Get to work immediately!

Everywhere I go, people tell me about a bootleg Troggs tape which, so I'm told, contains humour unsurpassed by even Monty Python's Flying Circus. If anyone has a copy I could listen to, I'd be most obliged.

On to records; try and lend an ear to the following: CHILLI WILLI (with Martin Stone from Mighty Baby) - out soon on Revelation, a bargain priced

ANDY ROBERTS album containing some of his best material (he's going solo again, I believe, after the sad collapse of Plainsong), GREENSLADE (who are also in the giant Crimson/Colosseum tree), STEVE MILLER's 'Anthology' - a double album of grade A (and some grade B) grist, 'Holland' - the finest BEACH BOYS album for years and years, the return of DOUG SAHM, the bargain priced re-issues of CLYDE McPHATTER (there's a name which carries a lot of weight), BUFFALO SPRINGFIELD (5 star jelly) and the COASTERS, then there's the new one from JUDY COLLINS (back to her best), the debut of CURT BOETCHER, the 3 CARATS albums (if you like oldies), 'Heartbreaker' by FREE (who, in my stupidity, I'd dismissed for some silly reason - they're great!), and 4 imports of interest: NORMAN GREENBAUM's 'Petals', JOHN HARTFORD's fine 'Morning Bugle' (I really like his stuff), JESSE WINCHESTER's second (which doesn't however, come up to the standard of his first amazing album), and the first album by PAN (among whom is ex-Beau Brummel Ron Elliott).

That should be enough to be going on with - but wait, I haven't finished yet - I forgot ROY HARPER's 'Life Mask', which should give you a few hours of thought (and you can go blind trying to read the sleeve notes). I'm

getting my arm severely twisted by Harper's manager (well-known underworld thug, Peter Jenner) to go and interview him - but I'm chicken. Roy Harper doesn't seem the sort of bloke who would suffer fools gladly, and he'd see through my thin veneer of intelligence right away. I remember Jerry Floyd interviewed him for us once.... he was a case - old Jerry; he invariably sent us cassettes that had something wrong with them, and his Roy Harper one was a classic example. He must've done it when his batteries were 80% dead, because when we played it back, (on our super duper electric machine) it sounded like Donald Duck talking to Tweety Pie. Not only that, but it had great jerks in it, as if the battery kept conking out and then mustering all its strength for a final rally - and after a jolt and a pause, Harper was suddenly heard to shout out, for no apparent reason, "people with plaster ducks flying across their walls", after which, all was silent.

Don't buy bracelets, necklaces or belts, but make your own at a fraction of the cost - that's what Mike Simmons says, anyway. To find out more, send a s.a.e. to Mike at 179 Botolph Claydon, Buckingham MK18 2LR. Do it now!

Just received a new issue of 'Fat Angel' in the post; it's got a great big interview with Jerry Garcia among a load of other things. To get a copy of this ace little mag, send 15p to Andy at 213 Eastcote Lane, South Harrow, Middlesex (he doesn't take as long to reply as we do).... and, on the subject of magazines, Pippin has uncovered a cache of the original, one and only, rare collector's item Supersnazz Magazine. Only 20p from D. Neale (his nom de plume), 16 Skaife Road, Sale Moor, Cheshire. Also, there's a new paper called Hot Raz Times, published by Urban Gwerder, Zark, Box 2468, CH 8023, Zurich, Switzerland. It's fifty Swiss francs for a subscription, but I can't tell you more than that because I ain't seen one yet.

Best band I saw during the last few weeks (apart from Genesis, whose Rainbow performance was one of the most incredible live shows I've seen - and other unreserved praises!) was the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band.... such phenomenal virtuosity and versatility. For instance, Jim Ibbotson has equal facility on guitar, bass, accordion, drums and vocals - and Jimmie Fadden, who's role I had misconceived as being minimal, turned out to be a great harp player and drummer, and a stunning lead guitarist! Don't miss them when they return to England, and try to get hold of their 'Uncle Charlie' album.

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## INCREDIBLE STRING BAND 'No Ruinous Feud'

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